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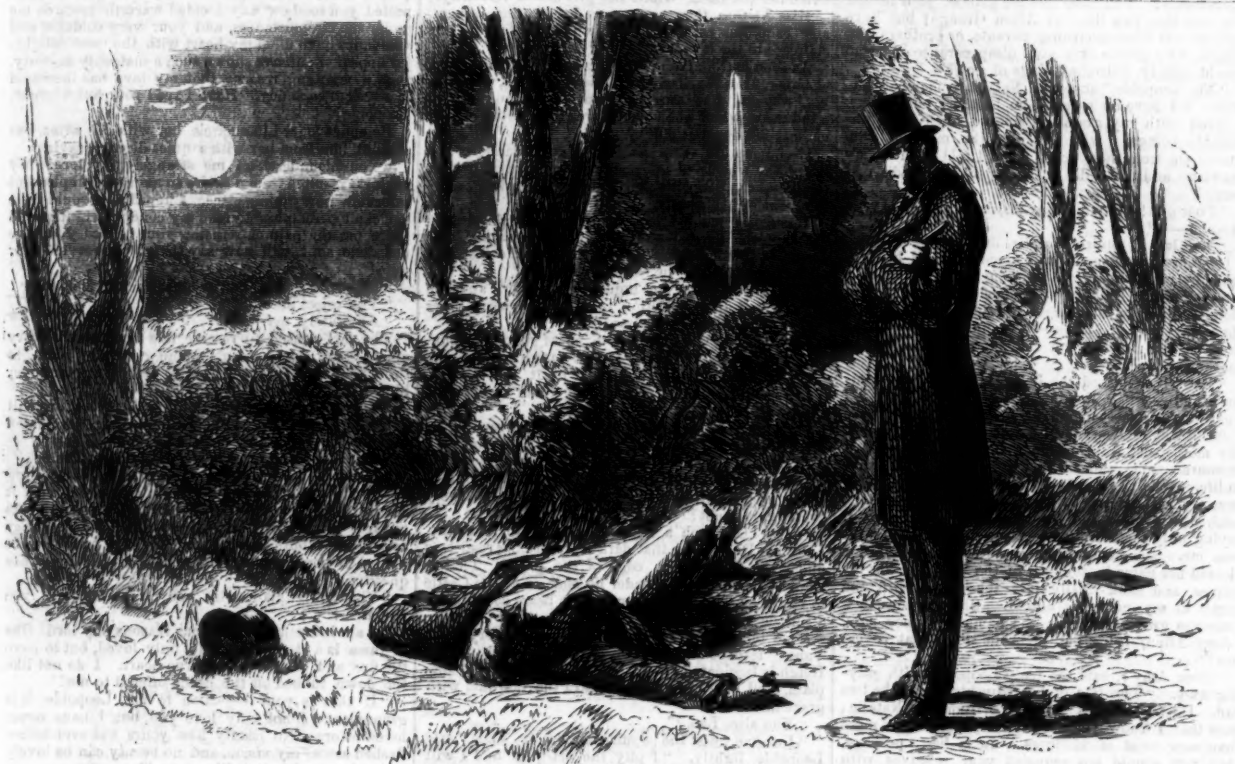
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[THE DUEL.]

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hear, solemn Jove, and, conscious Venus, hear!
And thou, bright maid, believe me whilst I swear;
No time, no change, no future flame, shall move
The well-placed basis of my lasting love. Prior.

Whither my heart is gone, there follows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For where the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway.
Many things are made clear that else lie hidden in darkness. Longfellow's "Evangeline."

ALL the generous sympathies of the Lady Leopolde had been enlisted in Natalie Afton's favour, and, as she returned to her guests, her thoughts lingered with the deserted young wife, and she wished, with all the fervour of her ardent nature, that hers might be the hand to sweep the dark clouds from Natalie's life, and that through her agency the young girl might be recognized as the honoured wife of the Earl of Templecombe and the sharer of his family honours.

No thought of Natalie's humble birth and fortunes came to swerve her mind from its convictions of truth and justice. She did not shrink from acknowledging the yeoman's grand-daughter as her cousin's wife, nor did it occur to her that the grandeur of the family name would be obscured or tarnished should Natalie Afton be acknowledged as the Countess of Templecombe.

The Lady Leopolde possessed a scrupulous sense of honour, and the loftiest principles. She had a fair share of pride in the name she bore, and in the family title—the bearers of which had always ennobled it, instead of being ennobled by it—and she would have preferred for her cousin an alliance with a family as noble and as honoured as her own.

But she gave no thought to her preferences now—the question of Right and Wrong demanding her every consideration.

Natalie Afton had been wooed and won by the earl, had been married to him in church by one of

God's chosen ministers, and that union so solemnly ratified could not be lightly dissolved. To the Lady Leopolde's earnest sense of right, the marriage was none the less binding because the earl gave a false name, and went up to the altar with a villainous design of wronging the fair young girl who had trusted all to him.

Had Natalie been a coarse, ill-featured girl, it is quite probable that the Lady Leopolde might have had a severe struggle with her pride; but there was nothing in the young wife's appearance to suggest her plebeian origin. Endowed with an aristocratic beauty and grace, a refinement of manner and an innate delicacy that showed itself in every word and action, Natalie was an interesting study—the more so because of the remarkable resemblance she bore to Leopolde, and her ladyship almost lost sight of the difference in rank between them.

Natalie's despairing face haunted her even in her gayest moments throughout that day, and the young girl's plaintive tones seemed ever sounding in her ears.

After dinner, leaving Miss Wycherly in the drawing-room with her guests, Leopolde went to the eastern tower to visit the concealed visitor. Natalie herself unlocked the door, giving her admittance, uttering a pleased exclamation as she recognized her.

"I thought it was Miss Wycherly who knocked," she said, confusedly. "Mrs. Murray is in the next room, and asked me to admit her mistress—"

"My aunt is engaged at present, Natalie. She knows I am here to see you. I could not let you go without a few more words of consolation and encouragement!"

"Thank you, lady," replied Natalie, gratefully. "You have comforted me greatly already, and awakened in me a desire to live, even if life should yield me little happiness! Oh, I wish I could stay with you always! It seems to me that I have known you years, instead of hours. Would you make me your companion, lady?"

"Call me Leopolde, Natalie," was the kind response. "I feel as great an interest in you as you can feel in me, and I should like to have you always with me.

If we fail to obtain the recognition you seek from your husband, you shall live with me and become my friend and companion. I have an idea, Natalie, that, despite the difference in our social positions, you and I have kindred souls, and should live together. Nature cast our features in the same mould, and the moment I beheld you, my heart warmed towards you, and I longed to be your friend and obtain your affection!"

Thus speaking, Leopolde folded her arms around Natalie's slight form, and drew the weary head to her bosom with an air of protecting tenderness.

"If Vane won't own you, Natalie," she said, caressingly, "I will adopt you as my friend and sister. Will not my love and esteem be worth living for?"

"Oh, yes, a thousand times, yes!" cried Natalie, impulsively kissing the hand which clasped her own. "I have been so lonely all my life, dear Leopolde, that your promise of affection and protection makes me almost happy again. I would do anything for you!"

"Would you? Then cheer up, and be patient and hopeful. These clouds that look so black to you now must clear away sometime. But yesterday evening everything seemed dark and threatening to you, yet to-day you have gained two friends—Aunt Alothea and myself—and who knows but that to-morrow may have further blessings in store?"

Natalie smiled cheerfully at these kind words, and pressed Leopolde's hand fervently.

"We must deserve happiness, if we want to have it," continued the Lady Leopolde, with a sweet serenity in her purple eyes that spoke of a blissful peace in her soul. "The next best thing to positive joy, Natalie, is the consciousness that we have done well and deserve to be blest. If we keep our own souls pure, the wrongs that we may suffer will not do us permanent injury, but will strengthen and ennoble us, and fit us to better enjoy the happiness that must inevitably succeed them. It is a pleasant doctrine, that of compensation. For all the tears you have shed, for all the despair you have felt, you will be rewarded, by and by, with ten-fold joy!"

Natalie looked up into Leopolde's face with a

reverential admiration, as if she were gazing into the countenance of an inspired prophetess.

"I do not intend to preach to you, Natalie," continued Leopold. "These truths have gone home to your soul, I see, and it is not necessary for me to dwell upon them. So change the subject—the wrongs you may endure should never cause you to wrong others!"

"I do not understand you—"

"Have you acquainted your friends with your movements? You have told me little of your former life, save that you lived at Afton Grange; but have you not left there mourning parents, or brothers and sisters, who grieve over your disappearance and who would eagerly welcome tidings of you?"

"No, Leopold," answered Natalie, somewhat bitterly. "I have no parents, no brothers nor sisters. I lived with my grandmother and uncle, two unsocial beings, who did not like me, and who turned me from their doors when I told them of my marriage, and that I did not know my husband's real name!"

"Poor girl! Why did they dislike you? It is very strange—"

"No, lady," replied Natalie, dropping her head. "I cannot impose upon your goodness and benevolence by concealing from you who and what I really am. Perhaps I risk your friendship by the confession—for surely a stranger would have less pity than my own relatives—I—and her fair head drooped still lower upon her breast—"I bear my mother's name!"

"But why?" asked the Lady Leopold, not comprehending what Natalie meant to convey. "Did your mother marry against your parents' will?"

"Oh, lady! They never knew my father's name! My mother fled from her home—a young girl with an honoured name, and many suitors at her own rank in life. Who she went with remains to this day a mystery. She returned, two or three years later, with a little child in her arms—a homeless woman, saying only that her husband was dead. That child was me. She never made any explanations, never cleared her name in the eyes of the world, or her relatives, and sank finally into the grave with the secret of my paternity untold. She now lies in a nameless grave, not even the name she once bore, 'Amy Afton,' being cut upon the stone that covers her!"

"Poor Amy!" said the Lady Leopold, with pitying tears. "The fate of her daughter must be less sad. Do not think I shall turn from you, Natalie; now that I know your sad history you have more than ever need of kindness. It is best, perhaps, that you should not acquaint your relatives with your movements until you shall have made every effort to clear your name. They would doubtless refuse all offers of conciliation from you, unless you could go to them as an acknowledged wife. But dry your tears, Natalie," she added, "and give your thoughts to the present. Your dress is not suitable for your little journey this evening to the farm-house, where Aunt Alethea wishes to send you. My clothes will fit you better than auntie's dressing-gown, I am sure!"

Without waiting for a reply, Leopold left the room, hastening to her own apartments on the same floor, in the opposite tower.

She was not absent long, returning with a pale blue robe, of some soft, fleecy material, a knitted Shetland shawl of blue and white, and a neat cottage bonnet of fine straw, trimmed with blue ribbons and corn flowers.

"These garments are all that is needed to perfect your resemblance to me, Natalie," she said. "Put them on, and let me see what impression I make upon others, for I have worn that dress often!"

She seated herself, while Natalie put on the soft blue robe and clinging shawl, without hesitation, and with murmured thanks.

"I seem to be looking at myself, Natalie!" commented the Lady Leopold, when the young girl's toilet was completed. "I never realized before, that I was so very fair—"

She paused, blushing, and Natalie blushed too, at the artless compliment rendered her.

Leopold was still gazing upon her lovely counterpart, when the door opened and Miss Wycherly entered.

"How fortunate that you are dressed to go out, Natalie," she said, abruptly. "My farmer, John Perkins, has just come up to the Castle with a supply of vegetables in his waggon, and will go away very soon. The moon is not yet risen, and you will have no better time to-night than now, to steal out unobserved. He knows you are intending to go home with him. He has instructions to treat you with the utmost respect, and to keep your presence at his cottage secret. You had better steal out through the park to the road, where he will stop to take you up!"

"I wish we could keep her here, Aunt Alethea!" sighed Leopold, as Natalie hastened to tie on her bonnet.

"But you see we cannot, dear," returned Miss Wycherly. "She can come and see us every evening, and visit you in your chambers at night!"

Natalie promised the Lady Leopold that she would visit her every night, if possible, and then embraced her tenderly, Leopold folding her in her arms.

She then approached Miss Wycherly, who quietly extended her hand, which the girl kissed fervently.

Miss Alethea then summoned her waiting-woman, and bade her escort Miss Afton down the private staircase to the lawn.

As soon as Natalie had followed Alison to the inner chamber, Miss Wycherly dismissed her niece, who took her way to the drawing-room, from one of the windows of which she endeavoured to trace the outline of Natalie's departing figure.

Giving up the attempt a few minutes later, as she heard the wheels of a farmer's waggon rumbling in the distance, Leopold devoted herself to the entertainment of her guests.

When the moon arose, the young people strayed out upon the portico and into the conservatory, and Leopold found herself separated from the rest, and alone upon the drawing-room balcony.

The solitude was not unpleasant to her, and she gave herself up to reflection, in which the merry tones of her guests floated pleasantly.

Her solitude was destined to be of short duration. She had distinguished Basil's laugh among the rest, and was eagerly listening to it, when Lord Templecombe entered the drawing-room and caught sight of her.

"All alone here, Leopold?" he said, advancing to the balcony. "You are playing hermit, I suppose? You have a cosy nook here, and a pleasant view!"

"You seem to appreciate it as well as myself, Vane," replied Leopold, quietly. "It is a lovely evening, is it not?"

"Yes. On such a night one ought to be happy, I think. Do you see that dark figure pacing restlessly under the trees in the edge of the park? That is Lord Waldemere. I wonder he remains at the Castle to blight everybody's pleasures. He bears continually a thunderclap on his face!"

"He blights no one's pleasure, I am very sure, Vane," returned Leopold, gently. "Lady Ellen Haigh is fascinated by the gloom of which you complain, and the other ladies regard the marquis with great interest!"

"You also, Leo?"

"I cannot resist the popular impression, Vane," said Leopold, lightly. "I pity the marquis, and I will not deny that I am charmed by his stern and haughty manner—"

"Charmed as a tender bird is charmed by the deadly serpent!" interrupted her cousin.

"No—you are wrong. The marquis is a man of terrible passions, I really believe. He feels strongly in all things. He would hate with a terrific force, and love with equal strength. He might, in a moment of passion, be cruel, remorseless, and revengeful, but I believe that his nature is noble, and that under his hard exterior is concealed a heart as tender and gentle as a woman's!"

"I see you are indeed strongly interested in the marquis," observed Lord Templecombe, in a tone of pique. "You seem to share Lady Ellen's fancy that he is a Lara, or a Conrad, or other equally romantic personage. The truth is, I believe, he assumes all that gloom just to arouse such admiration in women's breasts. Perhaps, he aspires to the hand of the Lady Leopold?"

The maiden was silent.

"I know you have many admirers, dear Leopold," continued the earl, drawing nearer to her and lowering his tones, "but you have none more earnest or more devoted than I! If I possessed the gift of eloquence, I would delight in dwelling upon the love I bear you and the hopes I have cherished that you will deign to accept my hand and heart, and grace the title last borne by your mother! As I am not thus gifted I can only say that your beauty has inspired in me the profoundest passion; that I lay my heart at your feet, and that I beg you to bless me by an acceptance of my suit!"

Lord Templecombe's voice was eager and earnest, showing that he was really deeply in love with his beautiful cousin, but his manner was so self-possessed that it was evident to Leopold that he had little fear of a refusal.

And Leopold's observation was not at fault.

His lordship had but lately consulted his mirror, and was in high favour with himself, his vanity surpassing a woman's. He had, moreover, been reflecting upon his worldly honours, &c., and had come to the conclusion that his cousin could appreciate them as well as himself, and that she would never be so insane as to refuse to share in them.

After a few moments' hesitation, the Lady Leopold said, in a clear, cold tone:

"I will not affect to be surprised at this avowal of your affection for me, Cousin Vane. I know that you recently wrote to Aunt Alethea, begging her approval to your intended suit, and that she granted it. But you must have seen during this visit at the Castle, that I have avoided seeing you alone, and that my manner has not encouraged you."

"Pardon me, Leo, but your manner has been all that I could have hoped for. I could not have expected you to show any decided warmth towards me under the circumstances, and your very coldness and avoidance have filled my heart with the most delightful hopes! You have shown such a maidenly modesty, such a charming reserve, that my love has increased in strength each day. Have I read your heart aright, Leopold?"

He endeavoured to encircle her with his arms, but she put him from her with a quiet dignity, saying:

"You misunderstand me strangely, my lord. My coldness resulted from a desire to avoid the unpleasant interview now taking place. I hoped you would have sufficient perception to read my conduct rightly, and spare me the pain of refusing you. Since you have not done so, I will now say that I cannot be your wife!"

The earl regarded her in amazement, ejaculating:

"You reject me?"

"Absolutely, my lord!"

The earl refused to receive this decision, the very quietude of the maiden's manner causing him to think that she merely wished to test her power over him. He therefore said:

"You will give me a reason for this rejection, will you not, Leopold? You have not been fascinated into a consent to marry Lord Waldemere, I hope?"

The maiden answered coldly in the negative.

His lordship then breathed freer. The remaining guests were his inferiors in rank, and he deemed it absurd to inquire in regard to Leopold's sentiments towards them, albeit he was not without misgivings as to Basil Montmar. Conceiving the maiden to be piqued at some intimation on his part, he urged the question.

"You will explain why you refuse me, will you not, Leo?"

"I am influenced by various reasons, my lord. One of them is a desire to be not only loved, but to have the first and best love of a true heart. I do not like the down rubbed off the peach offered to me!"

"If that is your objection to me, Leopold, it is groundless. I not only love you, but I have never loved before. No beauty like yours has ever before flashed across my vision, and no beauty can be lovely in my eyes unless it is like yours!"

"True, you may not have encountered violet eyes and yellow hair on the same person before, my lord," remarked Leopold, satirically, "but have you never looked lovingly into blue eyes?"

The earl started, and looked suspiciously at his cousin's face.

"Blue eyes!" he repeated. "No, never! What makes you think—"

The Lady Leopold was strongly tempted to reveal her knowledge of the deception practised upon Natalie Afton, by the man before her, but a timely recollection of her promise of secrecy restrained her.

"I have nothing farther to say, my lord," she answered, ignoring his question. "I have given you my decision, and I beg that I may hear no more upon this subject!"

The earl persisted in urging her to reconsider her refusal, dilating upon the grandeur and pleasures she should enjoy as his countess, but he finally discovered that his words were vain.

"You love another, then?" he cried, wrathfully.

Leopold was about to reply, when a welcome footstep sounded in the drawing-room, and her face lighted up as she turned to smile upon her favoured suitor.

Basil, seeing his betrothed in company with her cousin, would have withdrawn but for that detaining smile, and, beholding his approach, the earl became assured of the identity of his rival.

Even in that moment of rage, he whispered to the Lady Leopold a request that his proposal might remain a secret, and then, with a careless bow to Basil, he strolled away, with affected carelessness.

"You look sad, Basil," said Leopold, noticing her lover's wearied air.

"Your eyes are keen, my darling," he answered, stepping upon the balcony beside her. "I am sad. I have been troubled to-day. Tell me, Leopold, are you a somnambulist?"

"No, not that I am aware of, Basil. Why do you ask such a strange question?"

"Because," replied Basil, "I witnessed something last evening that caused me to think that you walk in your sleep. I saw you on the floor above your own—"

The Lady Leopoldo started, remembering that Natalie had visited the earl's chamber, and she wondered if Natalie's movements had been watched by Basil.

"What was there strange about my presence on the third floor, Basil?" she asked, with a tumultuous beating at her heart.

"I shrink from telling you, my darling. I cannot tell you. If you were asleep, I implore you to let your maid watch your nightly slumbers. Some harm might happen to you in your wanderings!"

"If you thought you saw me walking in my sleep last night, Basil, why did you not follow me?"

"I did, until I became convinced—oh, Leopoldo!—that you were broad awake! To-day, I know not what to think, if I had really believed you in a state of somnambulism, I should have rushed after you, and taken you to your room. I—I thought otherwise!"

Leopoldo's cheek burned hotly, and she was upon the point of explaining the mystery to her lover, even at the risk of breaking her promise, when the desire to try Basil's faith in her determined her to withhold for the present any explanations.

"Basil," she said, tenderly, "I am sure you think no evil of me. You cannot think evil of your promised wife!"

Her lover took her face between his hands, turning it gently so that the light might fall upon it, and then he looked steadily into her eyes.

The scrutiny satisfied him, for he concluded the investigation by earnest caresses, and said, sadly:

"I trust you, darling, fully and implicitly, as I would trust a sinless angel! You were asleep—"

"No, Basil. I never walk in my sleep. You did not see me last evening at all. You were deceived in thinking it was me. I know all about it, although I was not aware that you shared my knowledge. Have faith in me, Basil!"

"I have! I have," returned her lover, in tones that testified to his sincerity. "Since you say it was not you, sleeping or waking, I believe you! You have banished my grief—yet I wish you would explain the mystery now!"

Leopoldo answered by an arch smile and shake of her head, and Basil declared himself willing to wait until she was free to explain, his betrothed assuring him that the secret was not hers to give.

CHAPTER XIV.

The wildest hills that darken life
Are rapture to the bosom's strife;
The tempest, in its blackest form,
Is beauty to the bosom's storm;
The ocean, lash'd to fury loud,
Is high wave mingling with the cloud,
Is peaceful, sweet serenity,
To anger's dark and stormy sea.
J. W. Eastburne.

As Lord Templecombe passed out upon the portico, after his refusal by the Lady Leopoldo, he encountered his friend, Sir Wilton Werner, who regarded his flushed and annoyed countenance understandingly, and with an air of sympathy. Thrusting his arm through the earl's, the baronet led him down the steps into a secluded path, and finally said:

"I see you have no need of congratulation, my lord. The Lady Leopoldo declined the honour you offered her?"

His lordship nodded assent, not yet able to trust his voice to speak.

"I am surprised—yet, possibly, she is only trying her power over you. Shall you accept the refusal as final, and leave the Castle?"

"No, I shall not lightly relinquish a hope which has become the mainspring of my life, nor will I yield the field to a rival. The Lady Leopoldo will guard the secret of my rejection, and I hope to induce her to reverse her decision. I must think the matter over and decide upon a plan that shall contain the elements of success. You shall assist me with it, Werner, but not to-night!"

"To-morrow, then; but do not give yourself up to melancholy, Templecombe, or go about with a sad countenance, in which Montanar may read your rejection, and take courage to offer his suit. Take my advice, and devote yourself to Lady Ellen Haigh, or Miss Braithwaite, and your cousin will be piqued into a kinder behaviour towards you!"

This counsel met with a favourable reception from the earl, who turned immediately towards the Castle, saying:

"You are right, Werner. All women have a love of power, and, I doubt not, the Lady Leopoldo feels an exultation in having made me miserable. If I remain unchanged in look and manner, she will be piqued, as you suggested, and I shall not find it difficult to win her. I fear that Montanar may be a more dangerous rival than we have suspected, and I would like you to observe him narrowly. As yet, I think he

has not come to an understanding with the Lady Leopoldo!"

"Then I will do my best to prevent one! He passed into the drawing-room just before you came out! Yes, there he is on the balcony with the Lady Leopoldo. Join the guests, Templecombe, and be yourself while I interrupt the *l'été-à-l'été* that might prove inimical to your interests!"

The friends ascended the steps together, and Lord Templecombe then hastened to join the guests, while Sir Wilton Werner sauntered through the corridor into the drawing-room.

The lovers started consciously at his entrance, and an embarrassed silence succeeded their late animated conversation. These facts were noted by the baronet, even while he appeared to see and hear nothing, and his keen eyes discovered that Leopoldo's hand was clasped in Basil's under cover of her scarf.

The first effort of Sir Wilton, in the character of a marplot, was quite successful; the lovers soon quitting the balcony in search of their friends, leaving the baronet to the solitude of the drawing-room.

"Very good!" thought Sir Wilton, with a satisfied smile. "I have made a discovery. These young people have come to an understanding with each other, and Templecombe's way is more difficult. I must see him without delay!"

He started with that intention, but changed his mind on encountering Miss Wycherly at the drawing-room door.

He was, unquestionably, devoted to the interests of his friends, but, very naturally, considered first his own interests, and it was to further them that he relinquished all immediate thought of Lord Templecombe, and re-entered the room with Miss Alethea.

He was too wily to propose to her precipitately, or to risk his fate without having first paid assiduous court to her, and endeavoured to interest her in himself. He was not particularly anxious to settle the question that occupied his mind until he should become quite sure that it would be settled in his favour.

Miss Wycherly seemed thoughtful and self-absorbed, so that many of the baronet's rather brilliant remarks passed unheeded by her, to his inward mortification, and many of her replies were totally irrelevant to the subjects under discussion.

But, suddenly, as a footstep was heard ascending the marble steps of the portico, Miss Alethea's manner changed.

Her pale, statue-like face assumed a look of animation; her abstracted gaze changed to one of quiet interest; and her proud lips curved into a gentle smile.

Sir Wilton ascribed this change in her manner and expression to his latest remark, and redoubled his attentions to her, and efforts to please her, just as the Marquis of Waldemere entered the room!

His lordship looked moodily at the lady and her companion, and then seated himself at a little table, where, under pretence of examining some trinkets, he kept up a severe scrutiny upon Miss Wycherly, who affected to be absorbed in the baronet's remarks.

Sir Wilton made the most of the opportunity thus accorded him, and had begun to flatter himself that he had made a most decided impression upon his lovely hostess, when the remainder of the guests re-entered the drawing-room, and the Lady Leopoldo took her seat at the piano, playing a song that had been solicited of her.

Miss Wycherly gave place beside her to Miss Emily Braithwaite, and soon after left the room so quietly that even the baronet did not observe her retreat.

But one person witnessed it, and that person was Lord Waldemere.

With a stern compression of his lips, and a resolute gleam in his eyes, he silently arose and went after her.

She was not in the corridor, nor upon the portico, when he reached it, and his lordship began to breathe more freely, when he observed a stately figure, in feminine drapery, and with a scarf thrown carelessly over her head, gliding across the lawn, into the shadow of the trees bordering the home park.

The scarf was the Lady Leopoldo's, but the figure was Miss Wycherly's.

A few minutes' observation convinced the Marquis that Miss Alethea was about to visit the fountain-glade, although by a circuitous route, and, setting his teeth hard together, he resolved to follow her thither.

Waiting until a friendly cloud obscured the brightness of the moon, he left the Castle, rapidly traversed the lawn, and gained the park, then hastily making his way towards the fountain-glade.

He approached it cautiously, hearing voices, and finally paused in the shadow of the trees encircling it, his eyes glaring upon the scene they beheld.

The circular glade had never been lovelier than at that moment, surrounded by bending, whispering trees, with its green sward bathed in moon-light; and with its graceful fountain in the centre tossing up the

spray that looked like liquid silver, and that fell again to the basin with gentle murmur.

But not upon these things did Lord Waldemere look!

He regarded only the two persons, who, with clasped hands, stood within the glade, and whose words, low-toned as they were, distinctly reached his hearing.

Those two persons were Miss Alethea, and Richard Layne.

"I received your note this morning, dear Alethea," Richard Layne was saying, his boyish face bent over towards the lady, and have, as you see, kept the appointment you made. I have not visited the hidden cottage to-day, of course, and the time has been long and lonely upon my hands. Why did you forbid me to visit the Castle openly to-day, as I nearly always have done daily since you came here to live?"

"I have a private communication to make to you, Richard, and Lord Waldemere watches me so closely that no other course than this was open to me. I believe he would intrude upon us if you should call as you have heretofore done. You know that I have brought Arthur to the Castle?"

"You mentioned the fact in your letter! But was not the step dangerous? You did not explain your reasons—"

"I could not, except in a personal interview. Oh, Richard, the secret we have guarded so carefully is discovered!"

"What do you mean?" cried Richard Layne, in a startled voice.

"Lord Waldemere has discovered Arthur's existence!"

"Impossible!" ejaculated Layne, with a look of mingled apprehension and dismay. "Why, Alethea, you must be dreaming! Your fears have produced this illusion!"

He folded his arm around her and gently conducted her unsteady steps to the marble seat at a little distance from Lord Waldemere, who silently retreated a few steps, his burning eyes gleaming out at them through his sheltering darkness.

"No, Richard, I have not been dreaming," answered Miss Wycherly, not rejecting the arm that still enfolded her. "The marquis came upon us yesterday at the hidden cottage, and witnessed the entire scene with Arthur. He remained behind us to question Mary Perkins. John Perkins called at the Castle soon after and told me all his lordship had said!"

"My poor Alethea!"

"On entering the library, some time after John's departure, I encountered the marquis, who refused to permit my egress from his presence until he had overwhelmed me with threats, hints, and reproaches. He declared he knew the boy to be mine—also I should have been tempted to deny the fact. You can guess what else he said, Richard!"

"Yes, I can guess it all, Alethea," answered Layne, his fair cheek blushing.

"He threatened to wound me through the boy, Richard, and I feared he would injure him! Should he do so, how could I complain? I could not drag my story before the world, and he knew it. And so, to save Arthur, I had the little fellow brought to the Castle, where he is safely hidden, and where no one suspects his existence, save Alison and me. Have I done well, Richard?"

"Yes, dear Alethea, well and justly. But is it not possible that the marquis may discover the lad's absence from the cottage, and suspect his stay at the Castle?"

"It is possible; but he will never have any opportunity to verify the suspicions he may form. Should I be closely pressed by him, I shall send Arthur to you. You can secure the boy's safety by taking him from this neighbourhood until after the departure of the marquis!"

Richard Layne warmly approved this decision, and declared his willingness to depart with the lad at any moment Miss Wycherly should appoint.

"I knew I could depend upon you, Richard," said Miss Alethea, leaning her head wearily upon his shoulder. "But for you and Arthur, I should pray to die!"

"But for our sakes you will be cheerful and happy, will you not, dear Alethea?"

The lady smiled faintly, and then moaned:

"I will be cheerful, Richard, but I cannot be happy while my son must remain unrecognized. He is such a bright, intelligent lad, so brave and spirited, and yet so gentle! His nature is as joyous and joy-giving as yours, dear Richard. I should be very proud to own him as my son, but that is impossible! What shall we do with him as he grows in years and knowledge? We cannot keep him shut up for ever!"

"True, dear Alethea! I have thought of a plan by which he may mingle with the world without being wounded by inquiries in regard to his parentage. Let me introduce him as my adopted son, Richard Arthur Layne. I can let it be generally understood that he

is my nephew, and no one will be ill-bred enough to question me farther!"

"Your plan is better than any I have devised, and I think we will have to adopt it. But not quite yet, Richard! I must have him a little longer to myself before I give him up, even to you!"

Richard Layne replied only by an affectionate smile, at sight of which Lord Waldemere almost gnashed his teeth.

"We must avoid secret meetings, Alethea," said Layne, thoughtfully. "I shall continue to visit you frequently at the Castle, and we can correspond faithfully. If any of your guests were to know of our meeting, a wrong interpretation might be put upon it, and Lord Waldemere would be sure to find in it fresh cause for hatred and persecution. Are you sure your absence has been unnoticed this evening?"

"Quite sure, Richard. I left our guests engaged with music, and I do not think that even one of them could have noticed my withdrawal. If any one did it will be supposed that I have retired to my own rooms, where I spend most of my time. But I must return. You will come over to-morrow?"

Layne replied in the affirmative, and the lady arose, exchanged a few sentences with him, in such low tones that Lord Waldemere failed to catch their meaning, and she then quitted the glade, going towards the Castle.

Richard returned to his seat.

The joyous look he generally wore had given place to an expression of the utmost anxiety, and from a muttered exclamation that escaped his lips, the marquis knew that he was thinking of the communication he had just received from Miss Wycherly's lips.

For some minutes they were silent, the watcher and the watched, and then Richard Layne bent forward, and lifted from the ground a bow of ribbon that had fallen from Miss Alethea's robe.

"Poor Alethea!" he murmured, putting the ribbon in his pocket. "If I could but clear away the shadows that environ her!"

The words still trembled on his lips, when Lord Waldemere dashed into the glade.

Richard Layne sprang to his feet confronting him.

The two men regarded each other for some moments without speaking, but there was a deadly storm in the eyes of the marquis, before which Layne shrank back appalled.

The former was the first to speak.

"Miscreant! villain!" he ejaculated, hoarsely. "Give me that love-token you just put into your pocket!"

Layne hesitated, then handed the marquis the ribbon of which he had just become possessed, saying:

"It is no love-token, my lord. I found it at my feet!"

"Where it was dropped for your benefit!" sneered his lordship, transferring the bit of silk to his own pocket. "I know you and Alethea Wycherly thoroughly. Do not think you have either of you deceived me. To spare you any denials, or self-excusings, I will state that I have heard nearly every word of your late interview, and I congratulate you upon the ingenuity you have shown in providing for the future of your son!"

"That was certainly a most brilliant idea of yours—to adopt young Arthur Layne!"

Richard looked astonished, and taunted the marquis with having acted the dishonourable part of listener.

"Has not the result justified the act?" retorted his lordship. "I did not come here with a deliberate design to listen, but, once here, I could not help it. Do not feign a virtuous indignation at my baseness, Richard Layne, and lose sight of the enormity of your own conduct!"

Layne made no attempt at a response, and Lord Waldemere continued speaking harshly of Miss Wycherly, and inveighing bitterly against her champion.

"You are not the man to speak against Alethea Wycherly, or against me, Lord Waldemere!" at length cried Richard, stung to anger. "Who are you who presume to sit in judgment upon us? You have been the curse of Alethea's life! But for you, she might have been blessed and happy among women; for years you have been the night-mare of her existence! I do not wonder that she turns pale at the mention of your name, or shrinks in horror from your presence!"

The marquis fairly reeled at this declaration, but the next moment he reassorted himself, exclaiming:

"Nor do I wonder at it! She best knows the reason of her terror! No wonder that I hate her—with an awful, undying hatred!"

The passion with which these words were uttered died out of his lordship's voice as he repeated the last word, and he grew pale as if alarmed at his own assertion.

"Hate her!" he repeated, in a hollow tone, as if communing with himself. "Hate her! oh, heaven!"

Looking into his lordship's face, Richard Layne

noticed that it was convulsed with grief and anguish; but even while he looked, it hardened and stony eyes glared fiercely upon him.

"It is well that she fears me!" said his lordship, more calmly. "It is well that her soul can be moved to any emotion. I intend to wring her heart to the very core before I relieve her of my presence. I intend to be to her an incarnate Nemesis, and my revenge shall strike her in her weakest points!"

"Have you no pity for her?"

"None! But you do not ask how I shall wound her! An arrow to find her heart must be aimed at her son or at you. It is not my design to war first upon the innocent and helpless, but upon you!"

"Very well!" responded Richard, calmly, drawing himself up to his full height. "I do not seek a quarrel with you, my lord, and I would not have your blood upon my hands. Yet I am capable of defending myself, and of protecting the helpless ones who look to me for aid and comfort!"

"If you can defend yourself do so now!" Here are pistols. Choose one for yourself. We are far enough from the Castle to remain unheard by its occupants!"

His lordship drew from his pocket a small ornamented case, which, on being opened, was found to contain a neat pair of pistols, of the best brand and workmanship. He extended the case to Layne, who took it with reluctance, saying:

"I have no wish to fight with you, my lord. Your death is not necessary to my happiness."

"But yours is to mine!" interrupted his lordship, angrily, interpreting the speech wrongly. "For years I have cherished a desire to see you bite the dust, and at last my desire stands a chance of gratification. You cannot evade me now. You or I must fall!"

Richard made no farther appeals to his lordship, but selected one of the pistols and handed back the other.

"Stand off twenty paces," said the marquis, throwing aside his pistol-case and handling the weapon. "Oh, stay where you are, and I will measure the distance!"

"Layne made no objection, and the marquis paced twenty steps and then turned on his heel.

"I will count four," he said, "and we will then fire in concert. The survivor can make what explanation he pleases!"

Richard bowed quietly, knowing that Miss Alethea would have no need of words to tell her why he fell—if such should be his fate.

"One—two—three—four!" counted the marquis, slowly and solemnly, the rage leaving his tones.

As the last word was numbered, the pistols were fired simultaneously.

The noise of the shots was succeeded by a low moan, and Richard Layne fell forward on his face.

The marquis was unhurt.

His lordship looked at his fallen foe for an instant, as if fearing to approach him, but then came forward, calling upon his name.

"Speak to me, Richard," he said, bending over him. "Are you hurt?"

He was unanswerable.

Standing erect, the marquis folded his arms and looked down upon the form of the man he had so hated, but his expression was not that of triumph or exultation.

Years before, fair-haired, blue-eyed Richard Layne had been his bosom friend, beloved above all other men, and to that far-off period the marquis's thoughts reverted at that moment.

"Richard!" he said again, and his voice was full of pain and grief, "you are not dead!"

He paused, as Layne stirred and attempted to rise.

Seeing that his combatant yet lived, the marquis grew stern and fierce, and listened quietly as Richard said:

"I believe I was momentarily stunned. I feel better!"

"Well enough to finish the combat?" asked his lordship, picking up Layne's pistol.

"My arm is hurt! Some other time, my lord!"

"Very good. I shall hold you to your promise!" declared Lord Waldemere, coldly. "We will settle our difficulties with the pistol, as soon as your arm shall be well again. You can find your way home alone, I daresay!"

He bowed and withdrew from the glade, taking his pistol-case with him, and dashing into the thicket of the park, instead of proceeding towards the Castle.

Richard then lifted himself to an upright position, sitting upon the green sward, and proceeded to examine the wound he had received.

It was evidently nothing very serious, yet the blood was streaming through the bullet-hole in his sleeve, and he felt weak and faint, as much, perhaps, from excitement as from loss of the vital fluid.

He had walked over to the Castle park, his estate being the neighbouring one, and he desired to walk

home again, not wishing to alarm Miss Wycherly or her guests.

With this intention, he attempted to struggle to his feet, but his muscles failed him, and he sank back upon the ground in a state of unconsciousness, the moonlight streaming upon his white face, and giving it a ghastly and deathly appearance!

(To be continued.)

CHARLES LAMB.

It was Charles Lamb's custom to be always dressed in black. "I take it," he says, "to be the proper costume of an author." When this was once objected to, at a wedding, he pleaded the raven's apology in the fable, that "he had no other." His clothes were entirely black, and he wore long black gaiters, up to the knees. His head was bent a little forward, like one who had been reading; and, if not standing or walking, he generally had in his hand an old book, a pinch of snuff, or, later in the evening, a pipe. He stammered a little, pleasantly, just enough to prevent his making speeches; just enough to make you listen eagerly for his words, always full of moaning, or charged with jest; or referring (but this was rare) to some line or passage from one of the old Elizabethan writers, which was always ushered in with a smile of tender reverence. When he read aloud it was with a slight tone, which I used to think he had caught from Coleridge; Coleridge's recitation, however, rising to a chant.

Lamb's reading was not generally in books of verse, but in the old lay writers whose tendency was towards religious thoughts. He liked, however, religious verse. "I can read," he writes to Bernard Barton, "the homely old version of the Psalms in our prayer-books, for an hour or two, without sense of weariness." He avoided manuscripts as much as practicable: "all things read raw to me in manuscript."

Lamb wrote much, including many letters; but his hands were wanting in pliancy ("inveterate clumsiness" are his words), and his handwriting was, therefore, never good. It was neither text nor running-hand, and the letters did not indicate any fluency; it was not the writing of an old man nor of a young man; yet it had a very peculiar character; resolute, distinct; quite unlike all others that I have seen, and easily distinguishable amongst a thousand.—Charles Lamb. By Barry Cornwall.

THE POOR MAN'S FILTER.—"Aqua Pura" calls to recollection the fact that in the food department of the South Kensington Museum stands a filter, bearing the name of the "Poor Man's Filter." It is an ordinary flower-pot, plugged (not tightly) at the bottom with sponge. A layer of powdered charcoal about an inch thick is placed in the bottom of the pot, then another layer of sand of the same thickness, then pebbles, coarse gravel, and stones are placed on the whole. This forms an admirable filter, and one within the reach of the poorest. The name of the exhibitor of this filter is not stated, but its efficacy is very clearly shown.

WITHIN AN ACE OF DEATH.—Turning half round in my saddle to call on the men, I received a sudden shock, and felt deathly sick, and, at the same instant, saw a man trail his gun and run off. I killed him before he had gone three steps. His ball had passed through two coats, and struck a pack of cards in my left side pocket; they were quite new, the wrapper not even been broken open. The suits were each distinct; the bullet passed through all, stopping at the last, which was the ace of spades! and to this day, whenever Rosser sees me, he asks "if spades are trumps."—*Four Years in the Saddle.* By Colonel Harry Gilmer.

WELL-FED SOLDIERS.—It must be expensive work entertaining soldiers who are of so luxurious a turn as the Prussians. Every man of their thousands receives eight cigars per diem, the order running "and these to be of good quality." The men parade of an evening in the squares at Frankfurt; in front are piled up countless boxes of cigars of "good quality" (though such one always finds very rare in Frankfurt), and then non-commissioned officers go down the ranks distributing to each man. A fair allowance on the whole for each day's consumption, even for a German, is eight cigars! Any chance of the soldiers' mouths and throats becoming too dry by excessive smoking is anticipated by an order that the inhabitants shall provide a bottle and a half of wine, also "of good quality," for each individual. Further, coffee is to be served up in the early morning, before probably the men go to parade; and this last over, the wearied warriors come back to a substantial meal in the forenoon. The Prussians "having lost many horses in their rapid marches," the general orders that "three hundred horses shall parade," the animals to be "bien dressés," and a selection made therefrom.



[THE GONDOLIER AND THE FAIR PERSIAN.]

THE KNIGHT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER IV.

DURING Maud Ruthven's illness, and for two months after, the court was kept in comparative quiet, as with instinctive delicacy her royal protectress saw that gaiety would be distasteful to her, when her wounded young heart was following a noble father across the seas.

Maud was fast becoming a person of consequence in the household where Elizabeth Tudor's will was law, and the queen was already busying herself with plans for completing her education.

Few ladies at that remote period, and even amid the advantages of the nineteenth century, could boast of such rare learning as Queen Bess, and she resolved Lord Ruthven's daughter should have every facility which would have been allowed a princess.

As her ward gradually recovered from the shock her system had received, the queen was delighted to see her ward's thirst for knowledge, and her desire to excel in the various accomplishments of the times, and be a woman of whom her father would be proud, should he ever return.

Lord Ruthven had already given a solid basis to her education, and the queen employed masters in the various languages and in music, and when several musicians appeared as applicants for the post of teacher to her ward, she fixed a day when she would receive them all, and have the best judges at court in attendance.

The music-room was a grand old hall, with elaborately carved cornices, diamond-framed windows, rich in gorgeous glass, and cumbrous pillars, which lent it a most majestic aspect. The walls were hung with rare tapestry, representing mythological characters; the floor, of some dark wood, was polished to a mirror-like smoothness, and an antique silver lamp was affixed to each column. Within it might be seen a small organ, two graceful harps, the virginal on which, we are told, Elizabeth of England played with such skill, a clarichord, and a profusion of lutes, inlaid with pearls and gold.

It was ten o'clock by the hour-glass which stood on the clarichord, when the queen entered and sank into a great throne-like chair, while lords and ladies gathered around like a flock of bright-winged birds.

The applicants for the post had already made their appearance, and their names had been arranged in alphabetical order by one of her majesty's pages; more than a score of musicians were stationed in the music-room awaiting the hour of their own performance;

and some were young, some in the prime of life, and others had many a dash of silver amid their flowing hair. One by one they went through their *répertoire*, and finally a page announced, "Luigi Vellette;" and a tall, stately man, with a pair of dark, lustrous eyes, and a luxuriance of raven hair sweeping over his shoulders, took his way towards the queen, and sank at her feet, exclaiming:

"Royal lady, I know I am not worthy to serve in your majesty's household as music-master, but I have ventured to present myself as a candidate with my brother musicians."

"Your name and appearance indicate that you are Italian, and, coming from such a land, you ought to be a child of song."

Vellette bowed, and Elizabeth continued:

"We are ready, sir stranger; seat yourself at the organ, and play an overture."

The musician obeyed, and it indeed seemed as if some magic hands were at work there, for the music which rose and died around him at his will had a passionate expression that spoke to the very soul, and, what was more strange, he appeared to be equally at home on every instrument he touched.

The melody now clamoured like a human voice, when it would demand what had been unjustly withheld; now wailed in grief and disappointment; now sank into plaintive entreaty, filling the eyes with tears and the heart with indescribable melancholy. Those least susceptible to the influence of music acknowledged the strange musician's power, and when the applicants were dismissed, that Elizabeth might hold a discussion with regard to their respective merits, all declared the choice should fall on Luigi Vellette.

"Alfred," said the queen, addressing the page who stood near the entrance, "you may summon the Signor Luigi Vellette."

"I will, your majesty," and the youth darted away to do her bidding.

The next moment the Italian advanced, and, sinking before her, said:

"I await the royal pleasure."

"We have consulted our maids of honour and the noble lords present, and they all concurred in our own opinion—our choice falls upon you, Signor Vellette."

The music-master bowed profoundly, and exclaimed:

"Believe me, I fully appreciate your majesty's kindness, and feel myself flattered at your choice. As I am allowed the privilege of filling this important post, I will endeavour to do my duty, and make my pupil a proficient."

"The royal treasurer will fix your yearly stipend, Signor Vellette, and settle other matters connected with your position."

Again the dark-browed Italian bowed, and the queen retired, followed by her attendants.

The music-master stood, hat in hand, till the door had closed upon Elizabeth Tudor and her retinue, and then sank into a seat, to await the appearance of the treasurer.

He was growing impatient at a delay which was by no means pleasing, when he heard footsteps, and the treasurer entered. The Italian sprang to his feet, and said, courteously:

"Good morrow; I believe I have the pleasure of addressing the royal treasurer?"

"Yes, and her majesty has sent me to settle your stipend as music-master to her ward, and make whatever other arrangements as may be deemed necessary," and he proceeded with a business-like air to state how much the queen would be willing to pay for his services.

"Thank you, my lord," replied Vellette; "the salary will be ample for my expenses, as I shall take quarters befitting an Italian exile."

The treasurer seemed pleased at his evident satisfaction and his quiet, retiring manner, which befitted his rank and the position in which he would stand to the royal family.

"And when are the lessons to commence?" asked Vellette, and he leaned forward with more interest than he had evinced during the settlement of the stipend.

"On the morrow, sir stranger, at the hour of ten, Lady Maud will await you in this room."

As he spoke, the treasurer rose and opened the door, exclaiming:

"My lord, I am glad my duties are to commence at once, for it is hard for a man of my temperament to be idle." He moved away, making another profound obeisance as he crossed the threshold, where a liveried page conducted him to the head of the great staircase and down into a hall hung with suits of armour, and branching antlers, and with a sturdy man-at-arms pacing to and fro.

Luigi Vellette preserved his external calmness till he had passed the royal guard, who were going through a review on the lawn, and the horse which had borne him to the palace had struck into a by-road leading to London, and then his features worked, his eyes flamed, and he said, bitterly:

"This is another act in the drama I am playing; I wonder how long the masquerade must last; but, of course, that depends on Maud Ruthven! To-morrow

I shall meet her as my pupil, and I will see that she is favourably impressed with Luigi Velleto. Sometimes it maddens me to occupy such a menial position, but young girls like romance, and I must perforce humble my pride."

With these words, he spurred his horse onwards, and dismounted in a part of London tenanted by poor artists and scholars, and seldom visited by the nobility.

The next morning he might again be seen riding towards Richmond, and at the appointed hour Alfred, the page, ushered him into the music-room. Lady Maud was already there with the Countess of Nottingham, who had been commissioned to superintend the first lesson; but she had brought a piece of embroidery, and was too busy with her floss and the flowers which grew into beauty beneath her touch, to mark the earnest, admiring gaze of Velleto, the flattering interest he manifested in his pupil, or the praise he lavished on her own performance, though her fingers trembled in girlish shyness as she recalled her master's skill.

Time rolled on, and every week Maud Ruthven received a music-lesson; and though the queen occasionally came in, when she could spare a half-hour from the affairs of state, or one of her ladies was requested to be in attendance, Velleto and his pupil were often alone.

Maud progressed rapidly under his instruction, but every effort in his power was made to teach her young heart the perilous lore of love, and had she been older and wiser she would have perceived the channel down which she was blindly drifting. It is true, he had not yet dared speak of love, but the indescribable tenderness of those dark, melancholy eyes, the homage with which he met and parted with her, and the dangerous sweetness of those songs he now and then sang at her request, were quite as eloquent as words.

The Earl of Lennox felt a secret dislike to the Italian music-master, and yet he kept his own counsel, not deeming it politic or safe to interfere with the queen's arrangements, and in less than a month subsequent to his assumption of the post he had been chosen to fill, an attack of fever drove him homeward. Maud had earnestly expressed her regret when he took her hand at parting, and bade him return in season to be present at her birthday festival, which her royal protectress declared should be celebrated with great pomp.

It was a glorious midsummer morning that ushered in Maud Ruthven's sixteenth birthday. The sky was serene and cloudless as our dreams of Eden; the far-off hills were flushed with rosy light, and the streams, which rippled musically among the shadow of grand old oaks and beeches, seemed flowing over sands of gold. Myriads of dewdrops sparkled on every shrub and flower, and as they tremulously caught the sunbeams, glittered as if they had stolen the rainbow splendour of the crown-jewels. The lark went soaring far, far up into the blue ether above, warbling her sweet matins, it would seem, at the gate of heaven; the thrush and the robin glanced by on downy wings, and the eagle soaring from her syrie strove to teach the young eaglets her own bold flight. A soft breeze swept through the dim arches of forest, park and garden, shook the dew from the golden hearts of the flowers, and lifted the heavy curls from Maud Ruthven's brow, as she stood gazing forth into the palace grounds, and wondering whether the Earl of Lennox would grace her birthday fête. The morning was spent in the chase, and as they swept through the woodland vistas, she half-expected to see Cecil Hastings give her a welcome surprise by joining the party, and when they paused for an hour's rest, she felt strangely disappointed that he did not appear.

"Mayhap I shall meet him at the royal banquet," she said to herself, resolved not to give up the idea of his presence, and feeling that she had never missed him more.

When the hunting-party returned to the palace, and donning the court dress of peach-coloured satin, and the rare pearls which had been Elizabeth Tudor's birthday gift, she went down to the sumptuous banquet; the young earl was not there, and during the gay scene that ensued she felt lonely and restless.

When the banquet was over, and she retired to the rose-room for a brief repose previous to the evening's entertainment, the queen followed her, and, sinking into a chair, discussed the festivities, and at length said:

"I regret my Lord of Lennox cannot be among your guests to-day; I despatched a message to him, bidding him to come if it were possible, but it must be, he is not able to obey our summons."

As she spoke, a burning glow swept over Maud's face, and then receded, leaving it perfectly colourless.

"Indeed, royal madam, I share your majesty's regret, for he has proved one of my best friends."

"Yes, yes, Maud—when we do see him we will

tell him how much we missed him, but now let me look at your masquerade dress, and do not, prithee, lose your bloom and grow so sad, because an agreeable cavalier is absent."

With these words, she rose, and took a minute survey of the robe, the scarf, the veil, and even the slippers to be worn that evening, and Maud endeavoured to interest herself in all that was passing, for the queen's sake.

Hours were on; the sunset burned and faded, its dying light quivering across the tall tree-tops; the twilight came with her purple shadows, and evening closed in with the sky still unclouded, and the moon rising broad and clear, and lending a more subtle charm to the scene.

Luigi Velleto had been invited to preside over the musical part of the entertainment, and as even the queen was to appear in some assumed character, there was to be no formal reception; the bewildering strains from the music-room opened the banquet, which all who mingled in it declared to be the most brilliant they had ever witnessed, so varied and beautiful were the masks, and so enchanting everything in and around the palace.

There were kings and queens with armed robes, blazing crowns, and gorgeous cloaks—monks in cowls, and nuns with simple garments and flowing veils—goat-herds that seemed to have come from those green valleys that lie at the base of Alpine heights; Mexican water-carriers with their gracefully balanced jars, mailed crusaders, who looked as if they had stepped out from some ancestral picture, and gipsies in blue and scarlet rattling their castanets, and now and then waving a magic wand.

In the recess of a large Gothic window stood a slight and symmetrical figure, in the costume of a Persian lady; a tunic of lace, exquisitely wrought, fell over a robe of scarlet silk starred with spangles; a zone of silver encircled her waist, dainty slippers encased her feet, and a veil, which seemed woven of gossamer, floated around her like a summer cloud.

At her side might be seen a cavalier, arrayed like an Eastern prince, yet notwithstanding his disguise, his noble bearing bespoke the Earl of Lennox; and when the tones of his voice fell upon the ear of the Persian girl, she felt certain she was listening to Cecil Hastings.

He had arrived late, having met with many hindrances on his journey, and when he entered the thronged palace-halls, his eye had wandered through the crowd in search of Maud Ruthven, and when he saw the figure I have just attempted to describe, his heart told him it could be no other than the queen's ward.

Once, twice, thrice, she had been his partner in the dance, and then courtesy compelled him to relinquish the hand which so many were eager to claim.

Luigi Velleto had watched him whenever he and his fair companion circled passed the dais on which he stood, and at length he relinquished his post to a brother musician, and stealing from the throng, presently returned, disguised as a Venetian gondolier.

He too seemed to single out the Persian girl as an object of especial homage, and sinking on one knee, he said:

"Lady, may a poor gondolier aspire to the honour of dancing with one who is, indeed, the queen of the merry festival?"

The Persian girl assented, and when the dance was over he begged her to go forth into the palace-grounds. The Eastern prince had vanished from the crowd of masquerade, and therefore she more readily granted the gondolier's request, and they roamed into the gardens.

The moon hung like a golden shield above them; fragrant hedge-rows bordered the garden walks; tall, graceful shrubs, laden with feathery blossoms and bright red berries, nodded to the flowers that gemmed the greensward, and now and then, as the breeze stole through them, the berries rained from their stems like a shower of crimson dew-drops.

There was a constant murmuring in the trees as if the very leaves were audible, and ever and anon a pair of pet pigeons went soaring up, and circled round and round their heads as if they feared some harm might befall their brown nests. Still the gondolier led his companion on in silence, till they found themselves near a small plot of ground, around which a border of English daisies, violets and pansies curved in a flowery frame-work; in the centre of the spot thus enclosed might be seen a fountain whose clear waters shot up in silvery spray and fell into a magnificent basin of Carrara marble.

On either side of the fountain arose a mass of foliage formed of vines that had been turned around a light trellis until it was quite concealed, and they seemed pyramids of verdure. They were lighted by tapers placed within, and their effect was beautiful and striking.

Magnificent vines, and the boughs of grand old

trees had been twined together above the broad avenues, and amid their dark, glossy leaves a profusion of tiny lamps burned, till it seemed as if some unseen genii had transplanted the stars from the sky, where they had so long kept watch, to the cool greenery of the royal gardens.

"Here we will pause, if it please you, fair lady," said the gondolier, and he led her to a rustic seat by the brink of the fountain, and, after a brief silence, resumed: "Yon palace and the world are full of masquerading, but it would be impossible by any change of dress, or voice, or indeed by the mask you wear, to delude me where Lady Maud Ruthven is concerned; your lithe form, your light step, your winsome ways, have become too familiar to me for my own peace, and I recognized you as soon as I saw you circling through the dance with that Eastern prince."

He paused an instant, and then continued:

"Shall I be deemed presumptuous, dear Lady Maud, if I beg you to lay aside your mask, ere you listen to the story I have to tell?"

His manner was full of tender entreaty, but still the girl hesitated to comply, and he said, gravely:

"Be it as you wish; I should be most ungallant to urge the matter when you prefer to retain your disguise; but I pray you to give me your undivided attention, your earnest sympathies, while I proceed to make a disclosure which I pray heaven you may kindly receive."

"Hark ye, Lady Maud—there was once, I will not say at what period of your country's history, a certain queen, who took into her care a young girl of peerless beauty, rare grace, and keen intellect. On her appearance at court, the noblest lords of the kingdom delighted to honour her; the ladies of the queen's train envied her, and feared her influence, and the fame of her beauty spread through the land."

A young man, who had caught a glimpse of her on the day when she appeared with a royal boating party on her way to the spot where she was to part with her noble father, followed her with admiring eyes, and—shall I dare say it?—from that hour he felt himself her slave.

By day and by night his dreams were haunted by her image; he hovered around the palace, of which she was an inmate, in various garbs, that he might hear the sound of her voice, or gain a sight of her face; and when he ascertained that the queen wished to employ a music-master, he became an applicant.

With nervous anxiety he awaited the day when the matter was to be settled; and when he began to play, he threw his whole soul into the performance, and gained the priceless privilege of being elected music-master to one whom he had for weeks worshipped at a distance.

Time went on, and every meeting deepened his thralldom, till it was not love he felt for his beautiful pupil, but idolatry; there were hours when his heart clamoured for the liberty which would unseal his lips, and reveal his mad, perchance hopeless love, but he kept his secret, save what his looks and tones must have revealed.

"Lady, dear, dear lady, you understand me now—here, the Venetian gondolier unmasketh both his face and his heart!"

"Velleto—Signor Velleto!"

"Yes, your music-master is before you, it is true; her majesty may deem me no match for her ward, and a knight's daughter, but for once forget the difference in our rank, and let her speak to heart. May I hope you return in the slightest degree the love I ventured to breathe in your ear?"

At this juncture Maud removed her mask, but her cheek did not crimson with blushes, nor her lip dimple into smiles; she looked grave and sad, as she said:

"Oh, Signor Velleto, it pains me to hear your confession; I have kindly esteemed you as a music-master, but be assured I have no heart to give you."

A half-smothered cry broke from her companion; his features worked, his face blanched, his whole frame shook.

"Heaven forgive you!" he exclaimed, in a hoarse, unnatural tone; "you have blotted out my last hope; I have risked much to win you, and all is lost at one mad throw! Farewell, a long farewell, Maud Ruthven; methinks I have found a rival in the Eastern prince who has thrice danced with you."

With these fierce words, he walked away, crushing the daisies beneath his tread, and muttering invectives on him who should be fortunate enough to supplant him.

The Eastern prince had re-entered the brilliant palace-hall, and after seeking in vain for the Persian girl, had again wandered into the grounds, which appeared a fitting emblem of fairy-land. On, on he strolled, glancing into every pleasant avenue, and listening to every voice.

At length he struck into an unfrequented path, which grew narrower and more beautiful, until he almost imagined he was roaming through a forest aisle, so wildly luxuriant was everything around him.

Finally, he paused in the most remote nook of those lovely grounds, on the margin of a little lake, dotted with a profusion of water-lilies, and fringed with tall osiers.

Here the young man sank down in no enviable mood; for since his first meeting with Maud, when she had thrice been his partner in the dance, he had seen nothing of her, and he was half inclined to leave the grounds and return no more. Suddenly there was a rustling among the thicket hard by, and an unfamiliar voice exclaimed:

"It is high time you should have warning; let the eagle guard well the dove that has been left to build her nest amid the perils of a court."

"What means this?" cried the Earl of Lennox, "and who are you, prithee?"

"The royal household is full of new servants," rejoined the stranger, "and I am the jester, employed by her majesty to make merriment in such scenes as this; but, my lord, notwithstanding the cap and bells I usually wear, I have a human heart. I dread the villain, and like the true gentleman, wherever I meet him."

"Ah!" exclaimed Cecil Hastings, aroused by his words, "you and I have not met before, good jester, as I have been forced to keep aloof from the palace since you were employed, but I believe I understand to whom your words refer."

"To Lady Maud Ruthven," observed the jester.

"Aye, I hope naught has happened to her ladyship, but I have sought for her in the palace and throughout the grounds in vain."

"Follow me, and I will guide you to the place where I last saw her."

The young man drew his arm within his own as if they had been equals, and led him on, till they were within a stone's-throw of the fountain, which we have already described; then the jester darted away, and the earl sank at the girl's feet, murmuring:

"Found at last, found at last, Lady Maud—my long search for you is rewarded," and he took off his mask, adding:

"Prithee, will not the fair Persian, who has been queen of the fête, pardon my frankness, and follow my example?"

The girl could not find it in her heart to refuse, and as her blushing face turned towards him, said:

"Since despite my mask, you have recognised me, farther disguises are useless; but, my lord, you are a strange laggard, and I must chide you for coming thus late to celebrate my birthday."

"My heart was with you at a much earlier hour, Lady Maud, but I disobeyed the orders of my lord, and my good aunt, who shook their heads dolefully, and prophesied all manner of evils, when I set out from the castle. I left home in season to have reached Richmond last night, but had serious detentions on the journey, and it was only by hard riding to-day that I arrived at the palace just before the ball opened."

"Your apology is accepted, my lord, but as I had reckoned you among the number of my friends, I wondered at your absence."

"Lady Maud," resumed the young man, "you have no sincerer friend than I, and I hope yet to prove it to you."

"Indeed, you have proved it, my lord, and for that reason I regretted to miss you."

The earl smiled and said, earnestly:

"It is pleasant to know that I have been missed, dear lady, and now will you accept a peace-offering, in the shape of a handful of water-lilies, which I gathered from a little lake yonder?"

"It is a favourite haunt of mine," replied the girl, "and the water-lily is my favourite flower."

"That I had once heard you say before I left the court; it seems to me they will have a fine effect amid your tuck hair, and if you will allow me the pleasure, I will wreath them among your curls."

Maud bent her head, and he twined the lilies among those jetty tresses, and then drew back, and gallantly expressed his admiration.

"Since you have accepted this so graciously, I shall venture to present the birthday gift I have brought for you," and he drew forth, not a ring, a cross, or a bracelet, but an Eastern amulet, unique and elegant enough to have pleased the fastidious taste of Elizabeth Tudor herself. It was shaped like a shield, and most exquisitely wrought, and all ablaze with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. The necklace to which it was attached was composed of slender links of gold, connected by a minute *nigrette*, in which tiny diamonds sparkled like crystallized dew-drops.

Maud gazed at it with girlish delight, murmured her thanks, and declared she had received no lovelier gift that day. Cecil Hastings clasped the chain around her neck, and proffered his arm for a walk. Her companion then begged her to tell him of their morning gallop through park and wood, and the particulars of the royal banquet, for he could not yet

understand the purport of the jester's warning. Still he was left in doubt, and finally said:

"Has anything occurred to trouble you, to mar your happiness on your sixteenth birthday?"

Tears began to gather in Maud's eyes, but she did not speak, and he went on:

"Speak out, dear lady; do not fear to trust me."

"It seems scarcely honourable to reveal one gentleman's love-affairs to another, but I have to-night listened to a declaration which astonished me."

"And from whom?"

"Signor Vallette, my music-master," was the low reply.

"Ah! I feared, as much, for even before I quitted Richmond, I fancied I read his secret, and I have felt strangely anxious with regard to you."

"Did you think I should be mad enough to fall in love with him?"

"I hoped heaven would guard your heart," responded the young man, "but deeply as I disliked him, I must confess there was something most romantic in his appearance, and for many ladies at your age romance has a great charm."

"I will not set myself up as wiser than the rest of my sex, but I frankly told Signor Vallette that I could not return his love."

"Thank heaven for this assurance; it would pain me to see Lady Maud Ruthven stoop to accept a music-master, and methinks the queen would badly perform her duty did she not hereafter take care that you are shielded from such annoyances."

"Hist! what is that?"

"The court herald summoning us to the banquetting-hall, where the guests will unmask before supper."

"Tis a most unwelcome sound to me, for I would gladly remain in these fairy-like grounds, and with my present companion; but her majesty will expect you, and therefore I must lead you into the palace."

In a few moments they stood in the stately hall, watching the gay masquers as they laid aside their dominoes, and Queen Bess moved towards the head of the table, for the first time assuming her royal character and authority.

She had worn the white robe, the laurel crown, and the quaint sandal, of a Druid priestess, but her costume lent her a most youthful appearance, and as she unmasked, she looked scarcely older than on her coronation day. An involuntary cheer rose from the masquers, and the palace rang with shouts of—

"God save the Queen! God save the Queen!"

Elizabeth Tudor bowed, her acknowledgments, and as her eyes swept down the table, its artistic effect gratified her fine taste.

The royal confectioner and his assistants had indeed surpassed themselves, and the supper was a *chef-d'œuvre*. The centre-piece was a marvel of delicate icing, and shaped like a Chinese pagoda, every part being copied with minute exactness; rich jellies shed their ruby and amber glow through crystal and porcelain; silver baskets were crowded with fruits, and the glare of the branching candelabra struck across tall flagons and golden goblets crusted with jewels.

Royal Queen Bess presided at the supper, and as her glance fell upon Cecil Hastings, she said, earnestly: "Welcome, welcome, my Lord of Lennox—we will not stop to inquire what made you so laggardly on our ward's birthday, but leave that to a more fitting hour."

As she spoke, she pointed him to a seat beside Maud, and the moments now seemed to fly on golden wings. When the revellers soon afterwards dispersed, the earl parted with his fair companion, and rode on to London.

(To be continued.)

SINGULAR FULFILMENT OF A DREAM AT HARTLEPOOL.—A most remarkable instance of the discovery of a robbery and the apprehension of the thief by the realization of a dream transpired before the Hartlepool county magistrates. The wife of a workman named George Clinton, residing at 4, West Street, West Hartlepool, appeared to prosecute two men named James Leonard and Barnard Ward, for stealing two watches, the property of her husband. From the statement of Mrs. Clinton, the two watches produced were locked up in a box in one of the bedrooms of her house, and she had the keys in her possession. The prisoner Leonard was a lodger with her, and Ward had been staying in the house that day. During the night Mrs. Clinton dreamt that the prisoner Leonard had broken open the box and upset all the contents, and stolen the two watches, which were worth about £15. Mrs. Clinton awoke about seven o'clock, and felt very uneasy about the dream, and told her daughter, who was sleeping with her, of the matter; and the impression was so deep on her mind that she got out of bed, took the keys from her pocket, and went into the other room to examine the box. She

found the box, not exactly as she had dreamt—broken open, but locked. On inspecting it, however, her dream was fully realized. The contents were all turned over in confusion, and the two watches stolen. She immediately communicated with the police. Leonard had left the house at his usual time in the morning, at a little before six; but the police ascertained that two men answering the description of the prisoners had gone to Manchester by rail, and telegraphed for their apprehension. At two o'clock the same day the men were apprehended, and the watches were found in the possession of Leonard. The prisoners were remanded until the petty sessions.

TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXIII.

Strange tales are told.
The shepherd shuns the spot, deeming it haunted.
Old Play.

WHEN Clement Foster and his faithful servant George arrived in the neighbourhood of Eriery Grange, instead of proceeding at once to the house, they took up their quarters for the night at a farm whose tenant was distantly related to the latter. As for our hero, time and his military campaign had so changed him that none of the old familiar faces which he remembered appeared to have retained the least recollection of him—they stared upon him as he drove through the village as upon a stranger.

"And so, farmer," said the ex-gamekeeper as they were seated at their evening meal, "the old house, you say, is shut up?"

"Yes, George, it be, and the servants discharged!"

"Ay!" interrupted his wife! "all but house-keeper and steward: and I wonder they stay in such a place!"

"You speak, I presume," observed our hero, "of the fine old mansion which we passed on the way to your farm?"

"It be fine enough!" muttered the good dame; "too fine, perhaps, for those who inhabit it! It be no use, Thomas!" she continued, compelled at last to notice the nods, winks, and warning looks of her husband, who, having been born and bred upon the Mordaunt estate, did not like to hear anything which might be construed into disrespect against its owner; "but either Sir John be come back or the place be haunted!"

"Pshaw!" ejaculated the old man, pettishly; "why should Sir John—who is a *barrowright* and one of the richest men in the county—hide in his own house like a thief ashamed to show his face?"

"Farmer Gunter saw us, Thomas, and the lights at night in the north wing!"

"After leaving the public-house!" replied the master of the farm; "and then no sensible man would pay the least attention to anything Farmer Gunter sees! If the servants have been sent away, it be for economy, or something of that kind; and as for the lights in the north wing, I never heard of them before!"

There are few wives, however excellent, who can bear to be flatly contradicted by their husbands, especially when they feel that they are right. On the present occasion it was doubly galling, being in the presence of her relative, George, and the other gentleman, his master. Had the farmer been a tactician, he would have permitted the surmises, hints, and *outrés* of the dame to pass without contradiction—for contradiction, woman like, put her upon her mettle, and caused her to array facts as well as suppositions against him.

"Didn't Luke, the postboy from Old Windsor, say, in this very room, he drove Horrocks, the steward, and a stranger to the Grange three nights after the servants had gone?"

"Luke is a fool, my dear!"

"Fool or no fool, you can't deny it!" retorted his wife; "and the gentleman who has been seen at midnight walking about the park?"

"Some friend of the housekeeper's!"

"And the eggs and fowls we have orders to send daily to the hall?"

This was a clincher. The farmer lit his pipe and took refuge in silence. Had he been wise he would have done so at first.

Our hero and his companion had heard quite enough to assure them that some one had taken up his abode at the Grange, who, for reasons best known to himself, desired his residence there to be kept a secret—and who more likely than his owner? The following morning, accompanied by George, he quitted the farm and directed his steps towards the mansion. There is something inexpressibly sad in revisiting a

place which we have inhabited in our youth, especially when those who once made it a happy home are no longer there to welcome us. Frequently during their walk Clement paused to contemplate some well-known spot, and point it out to his companion. There was the home-wood, where he shot his first bird—well did he recollect the pride and satisfaction he experienced on the occasion, and the dispute he had had with the keeper as to whether the unlucky partridge had been fairly on the wing or not. Then there was the walk in which he used to saunter with Miss Wyndham and Martha; the stile where they awaited his return after a day's sport, examined his gibern, and laughed or congratulated him on its contents.

As they reached the front of the house, George silently pointed to the window over the porch, at which he had thrown up the gravel to alarm him on the night of Miles's attempt to obtain possession of the papers in the cabinet of Peter Quin.

"I have not forgotten it," said Clement Foster, "or that in all probability Miss Mendez owes her life to your presence of mind!"

"Say rather to yours, sir! You shot the robber—I merely gave the alarm!"

"We will divide the merit between us then!" replied his master.

"Do you intend to call at the house, sir?"

"Certainly! It is not a feeling of mere idle curiosity which urges me—I should blush to be guilty of an intrusion urged by such a motive; but the happiness of my life in some degree depends on my obtaining an interview with Sir John Mordaunt!"

"You really believe that he is there, sir?"

"I have not the least doubt of it!" answered Clement; "such, too, is the conviction of Miss Mendez; but we must be cautious in our proceedings—he doubtless has powerful reasons for concealment!"

"If at the Grange," observed the ex-gamekeeper, who had known the place from childhood, "I'll ferret him out! He must be clever, indeed, to play at hide-and-seek with me! I could hunt every nook blindfolded!"

It was some time before their summons at the hall door was answered. When the old housekeeper at last appeared, she was so hurried that both our hero and George had to make themselves known to her.

"She was happy to see them—very happy!" she said; then hesitated, muttered something about the house being shut, and finally, as if ashamed at her want of hospitality, asked them if they wished to walk in and rest themselves.

"*Wish to walk in!*" repeated George; "of course we do! Captain Clement has run down on purpose to see the old place again! He thinks of taking it!"

Mrs. Everett informed them that it was no longer to let.

"Sir John coming home at last?" demanded the persevering querist.

The housekeeper eagerly assured him that there was not the least probability of such an event—at least in her time. His health was so bad—Italy agreed with him—in short, gave a hundred unnecessary reasons why the baronet should not return to the seat of his forefathers. Our hero pitied her confusion, and followed the reluctant steps of the old lady as she led the way to her own room: he felt there was something cruel in making her regard for him the means of betraying her duty to her master.

The eyes of both her visitors, on entering the cosy little apartment of Mrs. Everett, rested upon a tray standing on the centre of the table. On it were a dish of cold game and a bottle of claret; they noticed also several articles of plate with the Mordaunt Arms engraved upon them.

A mutual glance, conveying the conviction that Sir John was really in the house, passed between them.

"Why, one would imagine you expected us," observed George, "from the preparation you have made! Just the thing for the captain's lunch!"

And, without farther ceremony, he drew the tray towards his master.

To hide her confusion, the housekeeper began to converse in a very hurried manner—asked a hundred questions after Miss Mendez and the governess; then, without waiting for an answer, started again with some fresh subject.

"Get me a glass of water, George!" said our hero, who had ascertained that there was none upon the table; and before Mrs. Everett could prevent it, by offering her services, the quick-witted fellow, who perfectly understood the hint, quitted the room; she appeared nervous and excited on his return.

"I must leave you, master—I beg pardon, Mr. Clement—for a few minutes! I have something to attend to! Of course you will not think of quitting the apartment—the house, I mean—till my return!"

"Certainly not!" replied her visitor, pretending not to notice her embarrassment; "I am tired after my walk, and feel exceedingly comfortable here, but I

should wish very much to see the picture-gallery before I leave!"

"He is here!" whispered the ex-gamekeeper, as soon as they were alone; "from the window of the kitchen I noticed the chimneys of the house! There is a fire in what was formerly Miss Wyndham's dressing-room! You know the one I mean, sir!"

"Over the north porch?"

George nodded in the affirmative.

"We have not an instant to lose!" added the honest fellow; "the old lady has doubtless left us to inform him of our arrival! She has gone up the great staircase—to see, probably, that there is nothing in the picture-gallery to betray her master being here. By crossing the servants' hall, we may reach his hiding-place before her! Are you armed, sir?"

"I am! But why do you ask? What motive can Sir John Mordaunt have to avoid me?"

"Strange race, sir—a very strange race!" observed the man; "I have heard my grandfather tell such tales of them! If only one half were true, we can't be too cautious! We had better proceed at once."

Our hero thought so too, and both quitted the room.

On reaching the passage at the entrance of the servants' hall, they found that the housekeeper had taken the precaution of barring the door, so that all means of communication were cut off with the rest of the house.

"The old fox!" exclaimed George; "does she think we come to rob the place, or intend to keep us prisoners?"

Returning to the room they had so lately quitted, he procured a carving-knife, which, after some little exertion, he contrived to introduce between the interstices of the door, and to force back the bolt.

"Now then, captain!" he exclaimed; "it is our last chance!"

On reaching the former apartment of Miss Wyndham, they heard the voice of the housekeeper in a subdued tone. She was evidently justifying her conduct to some one who imagined he had the right to blame it.

Clement scorned to listen. Taking the letter of Miss Mendez from his pocket-book, he opened the door, and walked boldly into the room.

Standing near the chimney was a man who had evidently passed the prime of life, although he still retained traces of great personal strength and activity.

"You infernal old hag!" our hero heard him exclaim, as he entered the room; "have I not told you that my safety depends upon—"

The step of Clement caught his ear. He looked up. It was fearful to note the deadly scowl which rested for an instant on his features. Taking a pistol from the mantel-piece, he levelled it with the utmost deliberation at the intruder's head, and fired.

Fortunately for the intended victim, his deliberation gave time to the housekeeper to recover from her surprise and to catch his arm. The bullet lodged in the ceiling!

"Sir John!" she screamed, "would you commit murder?"

Before the baronet—for it was no other than the owner of Brierly Grange—could arm himself with a second weapon, his visitor, calm and unruffled as if nothing had occurred, walked up to him and placed the letter in his hand.

"From Martha Quin!" he said.

At the name of the writer, Sir John Mordaunt turned very pale.

"And who," he demanded, pointing to George, who stood at the door, "is that man?"

"My servant!" replied Clement, in the same unruffled tone. "Doubtless the pistol which you accidentally discharged alarmed him for my safety!"

The baronet regarded him for a few minutes in silence, then broke the seal of the letter, which he read over once or twice.

"Captain Foster," he said, extending towards his visitor the hand which had so lately been raised against his life, "I am most happy to see you at Brierly Grange, and can only express my deep regret for the little inadvertence which might have ended less agreeably!"

The young soldier could not avoid mentally acknowledging the great tact of the speaker, against whom he determined to remain upon his guard.

"You will dine with me?" continued Sir John Mordaunt, in the same easy, familiar tone; "although I fear that I cannot promise you much in the way of dinner—for I have been in England only a few days; but my housekeeper—who, it seems, is an old acquaintance of yours—will do her best!"

"Mad!" muttered the old lady; "he must be mad!"

"In the morning I shall be happy to accompany you to London, and renew my acquaintance with my valued friend Martha! Let fires be lit in the drawing-room," added the owner of Brierly Grange, "and leave us! Captain Foster and I will amuse ourselves

by walking through the village together before dinner."

"Is this bravado," thought Clement, "or recklessness?" He could not comprehend the sudden change.

We, however, will explain it. The only living witness, as Sir John Mordaunt imagined, of his past career, was Martha Quin; and her letter had informed him of the conditions on which he might secure her silence. Hence the sudden change in his conduct to her messenger.

CHAPTER LXIV.

He is a man ready and apt in council.

Fitted to track the devious windings

Of crime's most secret labyrinth; and seize

The monster in his den. *Old Play.*

It was with a joyousness almost amounting to boisterous hilarity that Sir John Mordaunt did the honours of his mansion to his unexpected guest. His manner reminded our hero of the wild gaiety of a schoolboy suddenly relieved from the dread of punishment, rather than the polished courtesy of the man of the world. Clement was puzzled to understand the change, which was too sudden to throw him off his guard.

The baronet walked with him through the village, chatted with his tenants, spoke of keeping open house on his return from London, and even hinted at his intention of standing for the county in the next election. Not a word, however, escaped him to explain to his companion the nature of his former acquaintance with Martha Quin.

"I believe, Captain Foster," he said, as they strolled together through the picture-gallery, on their return to the house, "you formerly inhabited this place?"

The young soldier replied that he had been a frequent visitor at the Grange during its occupation by Miss Mendez.

"Strange," muttered the baronet, half-aloud, "that she should have selected my house!"

Clement remembered the instructions he had received to ask no questions, and forbore to demand why a circumstance which appeared so natural and unimportant should strike the speaker as being singular; but he noted the observation.

"And here it was," continued his host, "that you saved the life of Martha. Humpf! well, I begin to think," he added, "that there is something more than chance in the course of events, after all! Will you oblige me by relating the particulars of your adventure? I have heard a confused account of it from the housekeeper, who makes you out a perfect hero! Women always exaggerate—not that I doubt either your coolness or tact!"

The half-smile which accompanied the observation proved that he was thinking of the scene which had so lately taken place between them, in which his guest had undoubtedly displayed both the qualities he mentioned.

Clement at once described the affair as it had occurred. When he came to the struggle between the housebreaker and Martha, he noticed that the features of Sir John betrayed great excitement. He proceeded in his narrative till he came to the shot, and the agony of suspense he endured till he had ascertained which of the two had received it, and the transition from doubt to joy he experienced when he discovered that Miss Mendez was unhurt.

His companion grasped his hand.

"A lucky shot, indeed!" he exclaimed; "the best you ever made! Miles was a coarse ruffian—a very butcher at his trade! Would I had been present to help you!"

The narrator wondered how he came to be so well acquainted with the fellow's name, but supposed Mrs. Everett had informed him; and concluded by describing the death of the housebreaker, and the long interview which had taken place between him and Miss Mendez.

"Do you know what passed?" eagerly demanded Sir John.

"Not the remotest idea!" replied his visitor; "the lady either deemed me too young, or probably had other motives for withholding her confidence!"

The querist gazed upon him for some moments, as if he doubted the truth of his assertion; but there was nothing in the countenance of the young man to warrant the supposition that he was deceiving him.

"Not unlikely!" he muttered at last. "Martha was always a strange creature—I never could make her out!"

"Always!" mentally observed Clement; "that implies a knowledge of years!"

"Do you know," continued the speaker, as if anxious to change the subject, "that the death of Miles is not the only terrible transaction which has taken place in this gallery! It was here that Geoffrey and Richard Mordaunt—two of my ancestors—fought their unna-

tural duel: both were killed; but Mrs. Everett doubtless has related the affair, and pointed out the stains of blood upon the oaken floor!"

His guest informed him that it was the first time he had heard of the event he alluded to.

"The old woman has been more discreet than her master," replied Sir John; "for I fear it reflects but little credit on their memory! It was here," he continued, "that my grandfather cursed and drove from his home his only son—my unhappy father! The old man had all the pride, ambition, and evil qualities of his race, without one of the generous dispositions which might have redeemed them! I don't mind relating to you that portion of my family history—it will pass away the time till dinner; that is," he added, "provided you can find sufficient interest in the story to listen to it!"

Clement assured him that he should be most happy to hear it.

"It was impossible," he said, "to have been so frequently a visitor at the Grange without feeling some degree of curiosity respecting the family who had inhabited it! I have walked in this spot," he added, "for hours, contemplating the fine old portraits upon the walls, speculating on the history and character of the originals, and frequently, when a boy, have questioned Hancock the housekeeper on the subject. About your remote ancestors they were communicative enough. There is scarcely a legend connected with those steel-clad gentlemen and stately dames that I am not as well acquainted with as yourself; but at the name of your grandfather, father, or your own, they suddenly stopped!"

"I believe they have been faithful!" observed the baronet; "not that there is much to conceal! It is a tale which may be told, I believe, in most families! My father loved a poor but virtuous girl: had he seduced her, his parent doubtless would have lectured him in the most edifying manner on the immorality of his conduct—for he was very strict in his religious duties—relented, and forgiven him; but he married the object of his affection, and his father's wrath became implacable: he cursed, drove him from the Grange, and, but for the entail, would have disinherited him! I am the only issue of that unhappy union!"

"Not unhappy," observed his companion, "if they loved!"

"Thank you!" exclaimed the baronet. "I like that observation—it sounds frank and fresh, as if spoken from the heart! Well, then, they were happy—for they loved, if ever human beings did! At the age of twelve I became an orphan! I will not occupy your time," he added, "by relating my trials and struggles, hairbreadth escapes and adventures in other lands, till the death of my unforgiving grandfather placed me in possession both of his title and estate, much to the annoyance of my politic cousin, Sir Richard Trevanian, who did all in his power to keep alive the old man's animosity and hunt me to destruction! My appearance was a terrible blow to him, and disappointed all his calculations!"

"Sir Richard Trevanian?" repeated our hero.

"Yes!"

"Your cousin?"

"Did I not tell you so?" replied Sir John Mordaunt.

"Perhaps you knew him?"

"But slightly," said our hero; "but his son, the present baronet, was once my friend, till I discovered that he was cold, treacherous, calculating and heartless!"

"Runs in the blood!" observed the master of Brierly Grange, drily; "we are a bad race, root and branch. All that I inherit of good—if I have any in my disposition—I inherit it from my pious mother! And now that you know as much of my history as I know myself," he added, "let us leave this gloomy picture-gallery and see what Mrs. Everett has provided for dinner. Your reception was rather an equivocal one, I confess, but you are not the less welcome now that I know you and your errand."

He extended his hand as he concluded, and Clement Foster, whose kinder feelings were awakened by the narration of his host, grasped it with something like cordiality. The baronet appeared highly pleased with his new acquaintance, and they both descended to the dining-room, where George and the steward were waiting to attend upon them. At the sight of the former the baronet appeared annoyed; perhaps he thought that it implied suspicion on the part of his guest.

"You need not wait, George," said his master; "as we start in a couple of hours for town, you had better see that the horses are ready!"

The faithful fellow left the room with an air of reluctance.

"Thank you!" whispered his host; "you have more confidence, I perceive, than your domestic, who evidently does not comprehend the little contempts of the pistol when we first met! Few," he added, with a smile, "possess the tact and discernment of Captain Foster! May you soon be a colonel!"

"I am about to leave the army!" replied our hero. "At your age?"

"I have seen enough of campaigning!" replied his guest, warmly; "besides, the war is over, and I have no wish to remain a mere 'moth of peace,' as Shakespeare has it!"

"Perhaps you are in love?" observed Sir John.

Clement coloured deeply: not at the observation so much as at the brusquerie with which it was made. He knew not why, but he felt that it would be imprudent to intrust him with the secret of his engagement with the adopted child of Martha Mendez.

Two hours later, they started in the baronet's travelling-chaise for London, whither they expected to arrive at an early hour on the following morning.

There is something in mystery and concealment which naturally depresses an ingenious mind. During his journey the young soldier had leisure to analyze the nature of the impression which his companion had made on his naturally unsuspicious nature, and the result, despite its assumed friendship, was decidedly unfavourable.

He could account neither for his desire of concealment, nor the sudden ostentatious manner in which he had made known his presence at Brierly Grange to the tenants and neighbourhood; and he shuddered lest the fate of Fanny should in any way be linked with that of a man whom, despite his rank and fortune, he felt inclined to regard as a desperate adventurer.

More than once he asked himself if he were really the personage he appeared, or had assumed a station to which he had no claim. Clement had both read and heard of such impostures, and Sir John appeared to him a man likely in every way to carry such an attempt successfully.

"If Martha would only speak plainly," he thought, "I might obtain a clue to all this mystery which threatens my happiness, although it cannot shake my confidence in her integrity. But no—she is as complete an enigma as the baronet himself!"

On reaching London, he drove with his companion at once to Harley Street. The mistress of the house alone was visible. The meeting between two such old acquaintances was a singular one; but his travelling companion appeared the more embarrassed of the two; he held out his hand, which Martha at first did not appear to notice.

"Am I to conclude," said the baronet, assuming an air of dignity, "that my visit is an unwelcome one? If so, let it be made as brief as possible!"

"Certainly not!" said the lady; "I have long and anxiously desired this meeting! I need not remind Sir John Mordaunt that there are many recollections and feelings which render it an embarrassing one!"

"Not for you!" was the reply.

"For both of us!" resumed Martha; "but in token that my intentions are amicable," she added, "accept my proffered hand!"

Her visitor grasped it cordially. Clement Foster could not avoid observing the difficulty with which she suppressed a shudder as she did so.

"You must do me a second service," observed Miss Mendez to our hero, after she had warmly welcomed his return. "See your father, and request him to call upon me at twelve precisely—you can return with him! I do not ask you to remain now, for I have many private matters to arrange with Sir John Mordaunt!"

"One word!" whispered our hero, as he left the room; "is the destiny of Fanny in any way mixed up with that of your guest?"

"Yes, and no!" answered Miss Mendez.

"I do not comprehend you!"

"His evidence is necessary to elucidate the mystery of her birth!"

"He is not, then, related to her? She is not his child?"

"Heaven forbid!" replied Martha, in a tone which betrayed how deeply such an event would afflict her. "I would rather see her the child of the humblest peasant—nay, the descendant of Peter Quin himself!"—she added, bitterly, "than the acknowledged daughter of that bold, bad man—the heiress of his name and fortune! Dismiss your fears, Clement—Fanny will prove worthy of you!"

With this assurance the young man left the house: he would fain have first obtained an interview with our heroine, but Miss Mendez was for once peremptory with him.

"It can only be," she said, "in the presence and with the sanction of your father!"

"The sanction of my father!" he repeated. "Martha must be very confident in her proofs to dream of his sanction! But with it or without it," he mentally added, "Fanny shall be my wife! The world, its opinions, prejudices, and laws—pshaw! what are they when balanced against happiness?"

(To be continued.)

At the Wimbledon meeting Lancashire furnished 43 winners, the total value of their prizes being £451, including three £50 cups and two £20 rifles. Cheshire has 16 winners, with a total of £110, including two £20 rifles. Yorkshire takes £216, including four £20 rifles, with 30 winners, and the St. George Challenge Vase. Lancashire also won the county match for small-bore rifles.

VIVIAN TRAVERS.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOT without many uncomfortable misgivings, Vivian followed Olcher Roffey down the street in silence, half tempted, even then, to turn back to the home she was leaving behind her. But the thought of her dying mother drew her on, causing her to condemn herself for her reluctance to visit her, and persuade herself that it was only natural that Mrs. Hawkers should wish to see her daughter face to face before she should die.

At the end of the second street she inquired, anxiously, how much longer was the distance she was required to traverse.

"It would be a long walk, miss," answered Roffey, rousing himself from his abstraction; "too long for a delicate thing like you. I've got a carriage waiting hereabouts—ah! there it is now. Them horses'll take us home in ten minutes, or less."

He held up his hand, and Vivian perceived, in the darkness, a cab that stood at the corner, its driver half asleep on his box.

At Roffey's signal of command, accompanied, as it was, by a low whistle, he started up, caught the reins in a firmer grasp, and peered through the darkness to assure himself that he was about being employed by the right customer.

"All right!" said Roffey, opening the door, and assisting Vivian into the vehicle. You know the address, my man. Drive fast!"

The driver muttered assent, and Roffey followed the maiden and closed the carriage door, with many apologies for intruding himself upon her.

Vivian did not reply, scarcely heeding them. She was thinking of her parents, fearing that this visit to Mrs. Hawkers might be made known to them, and resolving that she would stay but a few minutes with the woman, at the utmost.

The coach drove on at a rapid pace, yet not rapidly enough to attract attention; but Vivian was too much engrossed with her thoughts to observe the direction it was taking.

It seemed a long time ere it stopped, and Roffey opening the door, assisted her out.

While he was paying the cabman, she observed that they were at a street corner, where there was no lamp, and that the locality was not familiar to her.

She had hardly made this observation when Roffey turned to her, and the cab drove away in the direction it had come.

"Why did you dismiss the man?" she asked. "I must return home immediately!"

"I know it," answered Roffey, "but the driver said he had an engagement, and couldn't wait. He says I can get a cab near here. I'll order it round while you go in to see mother."

Vivian was satisfied with this promise and explanation, and unhesitatingly followed her guide, who conducted her up one street and down another, pausing at last at a gate opening into a little garden, in the midst of which was situated a small white cottage.

There was no light visible at the windows, and Vivian noticed, as she walked up the narrow path leading to the door, that the shutters appeared to be carefully closed, so that the house had a deserted air.

She paused instinctively on the steps, condemning herself for having obeyed Mrs. Hawkers's summons, and half determined to retrace her steps without seeing her.

"I should have sent for papa and mamma," she thought. "Why did I not do so? They would have decided for me, and I should have felt far happier. I owe my duty to them, not to this woman."

While these thoughts flitted through her mind, Roffey had unlocked the door with a latch-key, and he now opened it, requesting her to enter, adding:

"I'll just see you into mother's room, and then run for a cab."

Vivian permitted him to usher her into the hall and close the door behind them. The hall was very dark, and she was obliged to take Roffey's hand, while he led her up a narrow staircase, along another corridor to a back chamber, from which escaped beams of light.

"I forgot to light the hall before I went out," he explained. "I haven't felt like myself since mother fell ill. Here you are."

He opened the door of the chamber, ushering the maiden into it.

The light was almost blinding after the darkness in the hall and street, and it was a minute or two before Vivian could distinguish a single object.

It was a gaudily furnished apartment, with nothing remarkable about it except its air of strength and security, and the fact that its single window was carefully boarded up, and covered with heavily quilted curtains.

The first object that attracted Vivian's attention was Mrs. Hawkers herself, seated in an ample rocking chair, clad in an invalid wrapper, her face liberally sprinkled with white powder, that failed to give her the sickly look that had evidently been her desire.

At sight of the maiden the ex-actress distorted her face into an expression of terrible pain, writhed in her chair, and emitted a hollow groan.

"You are dying, your son tells me," said Vivian, gently, as she advanced towards the woman. "He said you wished to see me. Can I do anything for you?"

The woman looked up, glanced from Vivian to Roffey, who lingered near the door, and he interpreted the glance by noiselessly locking the door and removing the key to his pocket.

"I wanted to see you once more," she said, in a tone singularly strong for a person in her alleged condition. "I s'pose you know who I am, don't you?"

Vivian assented.

"Did Mrs. Travers tell you?"

"No," replied the maiden, "she does not know that I am aware of the—the relationship between you and me. I do not want her to know that I have learned it. I stole out to see you without the knowledge of my parents, and must hurry home again. Indeed, I have not a moment to stay."

The last sentence was prompted by the conduct of Mrs. Hawkers, who threw aside the shawl enveloping her chest, and looked at the maiden with a countenance as free from pain or evidence of illness as was easy to conceive.

"Don't be in a hurry, my dear," replied the woman, with a disagreeable smile. "I haven't seen you but once since you were a child, and that was the other day. Only think of it! but once since you was two years old! But I have kept you in sight, my dear, and you have not lost your place in your mother's heart."

She arose, approaching Vivian, but the maiden retreated, with undisguised aversion, to the very door, coming in contact with Roffey.

"You here?" she asked. "You told me you would procure me a cab. Be kind enough to show me to the street, and I will find one for myself."

"In a minute, Miss," said Roffey, awkwardly.

"Mother wants to say something else."

The maiden turned toward Mrs. Hawkers, not without alarm, to hear the communication she desired to make, but the ex-actress seemed at a loss what to say. "You know what a mother's feelings are, Vivian," she at length remarked, feeling an unwonted awkwardness before this elegant girl, "and I am sure you will appreciate mine. Ever since I saw you that morning, looking so beautiful in your handsome clothes, I have blamed myself for letting you go to strangers, although I did it for your good. You were a pretty child—uncommonly so—but I couldn't educate and dress you as I desired, so I let the Travers's adopt you, intending to reclaim you some day."

"You are not ill—not dying?" demanded Vivian, abruptly.

"No," and Mrs. Hawkers laughed. "I sent Ocher with that errand, for I knew you wouldn't come unless you thought me dying."

Vivian's sweet face grew stern in its expression, but she said, calmly:

"So, when you sold me, you intended to reclaim me at some period?"

Mrs. Hawkers assented.

"And it never occurred to you that such an action would be dishonourable and wicked?" inquired Vivian. "Did you never think that when I should have grown to love my parents with all my heart and soul, it would be a cruel thing to tell me that I did not belong to them? Did you never think how wrong it would be to permit them to educate and care for me through my childhood, and then remove me from them when I grew old enough to repay them in part for all their goodness to me?"

"No, I never did," replied the ex-actress, truthfully enough. "Besides, I had the first claim upon you always. I am your mother."

"You mistake!" declared Vivian, sternly. "You lost all claim upon me when you sold me. I recognize no claim of yours upon me—none whatever. And you mistake in declaring yourself my mother. The mere accident of birth goes for little. She is my mother who nourished my infancy, who guided my youth, who cherishes me now as the dearest part of her being—she alone is my mother—the only one whom I shall ever recognize in deed, or word, or in thought."

Mrs. Hawkers's usually florid complexion faded to a livid hue as she listened to this spirited address, and she sank into a chair as if frightened.

Her son regarded Vivian's flashing eyes and impassioned look with increasing admiration, and it was evident that his sympathies were all with her.

"Then I am of no account to you?" asked Mrs. Hawkers, as soon as she could command her voice. "This is the kind of bringing up you have had. You are too proud to own your mother. I suppose now if I were rich and genteel you'd be only too glad to own me."

"No; rich or poor, you must ever remain the same to me—a stranger. And rich or poor, my mother, my own dear mother, will ever be all in all to me. Have you said all you wish?"

"Not yet," replied the ex-actress. "Whether you love me or not, or own me or not, you are a minor and I can legally claim you. I intend to do so. I have been robbed of you long enough, and I mean to keep you now. The Travers's are rich enough to adopt another girl, if they want to, but you must stay with me!"

"Make your demand to my father, then, not to me," returned Vivian, scarcely alarmed at this threat, feeling confident that Mr. Travers would find some means of satisfying the woman's claims upon her. "It would have been more honourable to have gone directly to him than to have brought me here by a falsehood!"

"But I wanted to see you—to hear your voice—to establish in your mind the fact that I am your mother," urged Mrs. Hawkers. "It's been a great thing for you to have all the advantages you've had, and you ought to feel grateful to me for the sacrifices I have made in letting you go. I've been poor, dreadful poor, and had great need of your services, for Ocher hasn't done much; but I considered your good, and let you alone. I'm pretty comfortable now, thanks to Mr. Travers, and you won't have to work only when you like, if you stay with me. You can amuse yourself with books and fancy work, and be as happy as the day is long. I've rented this house for a year, and Ocher and me are lonely enough in it. Won't you stay here with your mother and brother, Vivian?"

"I cannot," said the young girl, firmly. "When you gave me up it was for ever."

"But there ain't anything you can wish for but what you shall have. See, I furnished this room a purpose for you, and my room adjoins it. We will wait on you, serve you as you've been used to being served, and treat you like a lady."

Vivian shook her head decidedly.

She was annoyed at having been duped into paying this visit to Mrs. Hawkers, and she shrank with instinctive repugnance from all contact of intercourse with this coarse being.

"Let me go!" she said, quietly, turning to the door.

Roffey put forth his hand to detain her, exclaiming, earnestly:

"Don't go yet, miss—that is, Vivian! Oh, don't! I know mother ain't very pleasant to look at, but she's good-hearted, and thinks the world of you. It's true I never saw you before, but I have long known that I had a sister who was a great lady, and I've been very proud of you. I've read, sometimes, descriptions of the beautiful Miss Travers in the papers, as having been at some party and wearing splendid jewels, and I knew she was my sister. If you'd stay here I'd be a better man for your sake—I would indeed. I know I'm a great rough fellow, and that you are a dainty little thing, but you can lead me if you wish, and perhaps make a man of me."

Indignant as was Vivian at the ruse which had been employed to entrap her, she could not help feeling kindly towards this rough fellow who claimed her as his sister, and who had so suddenly conceived respect and admiration for her.

"If you love me, Ocher," she said, kindly, calling him by the name Mrs. Hawkers had used, "you will desire my happiness: You can be a good man without my help, and you will always have my best wishes for your success and happiness. But I cannot stay with you, for there are others who love me, to whom my presence is necessary, and who have a claim upon me—a greater claim than yours or your mother's."

"And you won't stay, then?"

"I cannot."

Roffey heaved a great sigh, looking sad and troubled, for he had set his heart upon obtaining from Vivian a willing consent to remain at the cottage. She looked to him like an angel visitant, and he had towards her the same feeling that lends boys to entrap little birds and cage them, delighting in her grace, her loveliness, the charm of her manner, and the novelty of her entire appearance.

Unable to plead farther, or fearing another refusal, he lapsed into sullenness.

"Go into my room, Ocher," said his mother, indicating a door at the side of the chamber. "Stay there till I come."

As the hulking fellow moved away, with the key of the room in his pocket, to obey his mother's command, Vivian reminded him that he had promised to secure her a cab in which to return home.

He made no reply to this, but said to his mother, as he paused in the doorway connecting the chamber with the next room:

"Don't be harsh with her, mother. Be gentle with her. She ain't like us, you know."

"I know! Leave it to me, Ocher."

Alarmed at these words, Vivian sprang to the door leading into the hall, finding it locked.

"What does this mean?" she demanded, turning at bay.

"It means," replied the ex-actress, "that if you won't stay here of your own accord, you'll stay without it. A bird that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing. Proud as you are, I'm your mother, and you shall stay here with me. You shall be kindly treated and cared for, but you can't leave the house."

"I am your prisoner, then?"

The woman bowed grimly.

Vivian looked beyond her at the door leading into the next room; but Roffey stood there, looking so rough and sullen that she saw escape was impossible in that direction.

Weak and trembling in every nerve, she sat down, endeavouring to realize her situation.

"I haven't half talked over matters with you," declared Mrs. Hawkers; "but we shall have plenty of time to talk together. Mr. Travers won't be able to find you here, for Ocher took the cottage, and Mr. Travers don't suspect there's such a man in the world as Ocher Roffey. Make up your mind to be contented, my dear, as fretting won't help you."

She arose, and retreated to the adjoining chamber, Roffey sitting before her, and Vivian heard her lock the door behind her. With a moan, as she remembered her parents and lover's probable anxiety about her, the entrapped maiden buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER XX.

To accurately and fully describe the delight of Percy Lorimer at the success of the ruse that had been played upon Vivian would be a very difficult task.

He had himself planned the stratagem, arranging even its minutest details with Mrs. Hawkers, and personally instructing her son in the part he was to play.

Although he had pretended to Vivian that he thought the ex-actress had retreated, he had been duly informed of all her movements—how Roffey had hired a cottage, how Mrs. Hawkers had delighted in furnishing it, how the maiden's room had been prepared for her occupancy, &c.

He had paid several visits to the ex-actress in her new home, going always in the evening, that he might not be observed, and it was by his advice that the house continued to appear closed and deserted.

He remained at the drawing-room window until the return of the carriage, which event was announced to him by Dennis, who looked around in surprise at the absence of his young mistress and the strange man who had called upon her.

Noticing his glance of inquiry, Lorimer remarked:

"Miss Vivian has gone out a few moments to visit a dying woman in the neighbourhood. She will return directly."

"Miss Vivian gone out—on foot—and alone with that man?" ejaculated the servant. "What will my master say?"

"I offered to attend her, Dennis," replied Lorimer, "but she declined my offer. I daresay she knows the family or she would not have gone. She desired the carriage to wait."

Dennis withdrew but half-satisfied with this explanation, and full of muttered apprehensions of his master's wrath when he should learn that Miss Travers had been suffered to go out in the street unattended.

"In the evening, too," he said to himself, shaking his head. "I didn't like the looks of that young fellow, but I hope and pray he won't take it into his head to rob my young lady."

With this earnest aspiration, he ordered the carriage to wait, and seated himself in the hall to wait Vivian's return.

An hour—two hours—passed, and still Vivian came not, and still the carriage waited.

Dennis, grown terribly anxious, continually opened the drawing-room door to make some inquiry or derive some hope from Lorimer, and that individual affected extreme anxiety that at last appeared to amount to positive fear.

"Say nothing of Miss Vivian's absence to your fellow-servants, my good man," he said, arising. "Your master would not like it, discussed in the kitchen—"

"I hope I know better than to gossip with the servants—and about my master's family too," declared the old servant, proudly.

"To be sure you do, Dennis. But I was going to say that I shall go for Mr. and Mrs. Travers, as my anxiety has become insupportable. Should Miss Vivian return before me you can inform her where I am gone."

He quitted the house, entered the carriage, and drove rapidly to the scene of the evening's gaieties.

The carriage halted at a little distance from the house, and Lorimer despatched the coachman to inquire for Mr. Travers and bring him to the vehicle, strictly enjoining him to make his inquiries as carelessly as possible.

The man obeyed, soon returning with Mr. Travers, who hastened to the carriage, exclaiming:

"You are late. We have been quite anxious, darling—Why, Percy, where is Vivian?"

The inquiry was made in a startled tone, as he saw that Lorimer was alone.

"Come in, my dear cousin," said Percy, opening the carriage door. "Sit down here, while I explain."

Drayton appeared to imagine evil news, for he seated himself silently, his hand grasping Lorimer like a vice.

"I hardly know how to tell you what has happened since your departure from home, cousin; but, after all, my fears may be groundless. Vivian went out a couple of hours since, and has not returned."

"Vivian gone out—not returned!" repeated Drayton, in a dazed manner. "I don't understand—"

"Directly after you and Mrs. Travers had departed, a man called, inquiring for Vivian. Dennis ushered him into the drawing-room, and the fellow stated that his mother was dying, and desired of all things to see Miss Travers before her death. He promised to detain her but a very few minutes, declaring that he lived in the immediate neighbourhood, and after some hesitation Vivian agreed to accompany him. I offered to go with her, but she would not accept my escort. She bade me keep the carriage waiting, as she should return almost immediately. I obeyed her, waiting two hours, but she had not having returned, my fears got the better of me, and I came in search of you."

"Strange! Did the fellow give his name and address?"

"Neither."

"How could the dear child have been so imprudent?" cried Mr. Travers, in alarm.

"But perhaps she has returned by this time."

"I will go home with you."

Adding, that he would go for his hat, he sprang from the carriage and re-entered the house.

When he returned he was accompanied by Mrs. Travers, who having seen his withdrawal, and connected it with the mysterious absence of her daughter, had met him on his return for his hat, and insisted on accompanying him home.

"What is it, Percy?" she asked, entering the carriage.

"Is Vivian ill?"

Lorimer repeated the story he had already told his cousin, and then became silent.

The alarmed parents did not speak until they reached home, then it was to question Dennis, who informed him that his young mistress had not returned.

Mrs. Travers, faint and ill, was assisted into the drawing-room by her husband, who protested that nothing surely had happened to their darling, and that she was lingering by the bedside of some dying woman, forgetting in her ministrations the lapse of time.

"Have you told us all, Percy?" asked Mrs. Travers, turning to him. "You look troubled, and even terrified. You know something more than you have told us."

Lorimer put his handkerchief to his face.

This act was all that was needed to fully terrify Drayton Travers and his wife, and they besought Percy to tell them the worst.

"I will," he said, as if struggling for calmness. "The fellow said he was sent here by a woman who called herself the mother of your Vivian—"

Mr. Travers groaned, and Mrs. Travers uttered a wild cry that was instantly stifled.

"Neither Vivian nor I could credit his tale, but the woman had told him to mention that her name was Hawkers, and that she was the same person who had called upon you recently, whose visit had caused you so much emotion. Vivian did not believe him. She knew that you were her parents, she said, and she would never recognize any other. The fellow offered her proofs—a letter from this Mrs. Hawkers, whom I did not see—and on the strength of that she agreed to go home with him. I wanted to go with her, but she did not wish it. The fellow's story was, of course, too incredible for belief, and I daresay Vivian thought the message the delirium of a dying person!"

"Then she is dying?" asked Mr. Travers.

Lorimer assented.

"Thank heaven!" breathed the parents.

"What! can this wild story be true?" inquired Lorimer, in pretended surprise. "Is not Vivian your own daughter?"

The silence of his relatives was their only reply.

"I should never have suspected it! Why, Vivian is the very image of Mrs. Travers, only more youthful and slight. I cannot believe it! Poor Vivian!"

The tone in which he commiserated the maiden showed that he did not believe it.

At this juncture, Philip Aynsourt entered, having just returned from his visit to his uncle, walking all the way home.

His surprise at finding Mr. Travers and his wife in tears and anguish was great, and Lorimer explained to him the meaning of the scene.

"Vivian not Drayton Travers's daughter!" exclaimed the secretary. "Impossible!"

"It does seem so," said Mr. Travers, mournfully. "She seems a part of ourselves. I can hardly realize that she is ours only by love and adoption."

"Then this story is true!" cried Philip. "I am quite bewildered. But we must search for her without delay."

"Let the search be quiet, then," said Mrs. Travers. "No one must know that she is not our child, and I do not wish any report to get abroad of her disappearance. She will come home as soon as she can. She will think of my grief, of her father, of you, Philip."

The question arose where should they search. Nothing was known of Mrs. Hawkers's residence, and it remained only to search the streets, which would be a worse than useless task, since if Vivian was in the street she would soon be home.

It was seen that nothing could be done but wait quietly for her return.

For hours they remained in the drawing-room, on the alert for every sound that could give hope of her return, and the faithful Dennis kept up his vigil in the hall, and still she did not come.

By the morning's dawn, her parents and lover were quite wild about her, beginning to entertain suspicions of the truth.

Lorimer left them to their anguish, going first to the library and searching Vivian's desk, taking therefrom some copies of verses in her own hand-writing, and with these he retreated to his own room.

He then proceeded, skillfully imitating her penmanship, to write a letter purporting to be from her, and with this he slipped out of the house, hastening to the post-office. Having posted it, he returned home, finding his absence unsuspected.

In the course of a couple of hours, the letter was delivered with several others, and Philip, to whom they were handed, uttered a cry of mingled joy and surprise as he saw the handwriting.

"This is from Vivian," he said, huskily, his voice trembling.

"Read it!" exclaimed Mr. Travers. "My eyes are dim."

Philip opened the missive, reading its contents aloud.

It was to the effect that the writer, Vivian, had accompanied the messenger home on the previous evening; had found that Mrs. Hawkers was not ill, as pretended, but anxious to reclaim her. It expressed astonishment at discovering that she was not the child of the Travers's, stating that she could hardly believe the truth. There was affectionate mention of her parents' goodness to her, of Philip's love, and concluded with the statement that Mrs. Hawkers intended starting with her within an hour, and that she had bribed the messenger to post the letter for her.

The epistle was artfully got up, and as he listened to it, Lorimer was quite charmed with his own genius.

"The letter was dated last evening," said Philip, when he had finished. "She must then have started last night. I will inquire at the railway office for any traces of her."

He hastened to do so.

Strangely enough, he returned with the news that an elderly woman and a young girl had taken tickets the previous evening.

"It was Vivian and Mrs. Hawkers," declared Lorimer. "Poor Vivian! She is far from us now."

"We must follow her by the first train, Drayton," said Mrs. Travers, starting up. "We must neglect everything until we recover our child!"

Mr. Travers eagerly assented, and Philip begged to be allowed to accompany them, which request was granted.

"Percy shall remain in charge of the house," said Mr. Travers, "and await here, farther news from our child."

Matters were so arranged, much to the secret delight of Lorimer, and the next train carried in it the parents and lover of Vivian Travers, thus leaving Lorimer master of the field.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE evening subsequent to the departure of the Travers's and Philip Aynsourt, in search of their lost one, Percy Lorimer stole from his cousin's mansion and took his way to the retired street in which the cottage of Mrs. Hawkers was situated.

Entering the house with a key which had been provided him, he sought the back-room on the lower floor, finding there the mistress of the place. A huge solar lamp occupied the centre of a large table, and around it were grouped a variety and profusion of edibles in the enjoyment of which Mrs. Hawkers was engaged at the moment of his appearance.

She arose, greeted him respectfully, and invited him to join her in the repast.

"Thank you," rejoined Lorimer, taking a seat at a little distance from the table. I have already dined. But don't let me interrupt you. We can talk, you know, while you finish your dinner."

The woman resumed her seat at the table, and her visitor inquired, "Well, how is the girl?"

"Quiet enough now—as quiet as a lamb," was the reply. "She's got spirit enough though, I can tell you. She has examined her window and doors, screamed, in hopeless passion by might hear her and come to her rescue, and made every attempt at escape, but it was all of no account. No one could hear from the street, even if she had a man's lungs, and her window is so carefully boarded up that she can't make herself seen."

"I knew she would not submit tamely."

"Tamely! You ought to have heard her talk to me when I took in her breakfast and luncheon."

"She looked at me as sternly as a judge about to pronounce sentence, and informed me that I was cruel and treacherous, that she did not like me and never should, and that she should escape the first chance she got."

Lorimer smiled.

"And then," continued Mrs. Hawkers, interested in her own narration, "she tried to fly past me into my room; but there stood Olcher, and she knew 'twarn't no use trying to get out, with him on guard. She became silent after that, taking refuge in her pride, I suppose. She has walked her room all day though, and when I took in her supper, a little while ago, she had changed her tune, begging me to pity her parents—as she calls 'em—and let her go. Then she came down a little, asking to write and let 'em know who she was with; and finally, when I refused, she declared that 'Cousin Percy' knew where she was, or who she went away with, and he would tell her parents and assist in searching for her. She's got a pretty good opinion of you, you see, Mr. Lorimer."

The visitor nodded, and asked:

"Where's Olcher?"

"Gone out a little while. That thousand pounds you offered him has bought him body and soul, though I never saw him so took with anyone as he is with the girl. He calls her 'Miss,' and treats her as respectful as if she were a born queen. There ain't nothing good enough for her, and he's dreadful afraid I won't be as respectful to her as he is."

"He won't be letting her go, will he?"

"No, indeed. He'd keep her here if he didn't expect to get a penny for it. He says he'd carried her off long ago if he'd known what a beauty she was. He acts as if he was mad with delight, thinking what a dainty creature we've got shut up here, and he makes great calculations on her getting contented with us, so's to have the freedom of the house."

"It is fortunate that he is her brother," said Lorimer, "or he might take a fancy to marry her—dis-missal as they are."

The woman dropped her knife and fork, regarding her visitor in astonishment, then a cunning gleam appeared in her eyes, as if a wonderful idea had been suggested to her, and her mouth assumed a treacherous yet resolute expression.

Lorimer was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to observe the change of her features, and she soon resumed eating, with abstracted manner, which disappeared as he said:

"So she continues to call the Travers's her parents, does she?"

"Yes, and she don't own meat at all. She calls me 'Mrs. Hawkers'; and when I reminded her that I was her mother, her lip curled, and she said she had but one mother, and that was Mrs. Travers. She don't call Olcher 'brother' neither."

"Well, I don't wonder at it," said the visitor, musingly. "She seems of another race from you. I cannot trace in her face the faintest resemblance to you, while, singularly enough, she's the exact picture of her adopted mother, Mrs. Travers."

He stopped, observing a livid pallor creeping over Mrs. Hawkers's face and making it a dead-grey hue.

His bloodhound faculties immediately asserted themselves, and in that moment he formed a theory which he made it his future task to develop.



[MRS. HAWKERS AS THE SICK MOTHER.]

"What do you intend to do now about the girl?" asked Mrs. Hawkers, finding her voice, and ignoring his last remark. "My instructions were to get her here, shut her up, and wait for your visit. What comes next? Do you want to go up and see her?"

"By no means. I would not for the world have her know that I know where she is, or that I have aught to do with her abduction. She knows that Roffey has gone out this evening, doesn't she?"

The woman nodded assent.

"Then, when you take in her breakfast to-morrow morning, tell her that Roffey heard that Mr. Lorimer is searching everywhere for her, his mind almost in a state of insanity at her disappearance."

"I'll tell her," declared the ex-actress, with a smile.

"And tell her, her parents have gone in search of her, on a false clue, and they have taken with them Mr. Philip Aynescourt—"

"Then you managed the letter all right?" inquired the woman, eagerly. "You wrote the letter, pretending to be from Vivian?"

"Yes, and they were duped by it. The three of them—the Travers's and young Aynescourt—were fit candidates for Bedlam when they left to-day by the train on the track of two women, supposed by them to be Vivian and yourself. They are not likely to discover the cheat under two or three days' journey, and they cannot return in less than a week. In that time I hope to accomplish a great deal."

"No doubt you will. I will do my share, making the girl see how friendless she is, with the exception of yourself, and turn all her thoughts to you as her possible rescuer."

"Right. Keep her excited with false details of my energy in searching for her. Tell her how delicate I am in keeping her disappearance a secret from her acquaintances and friends, none of whom suspects that she is not the daughter of the Travers's or that she is absent from home. Tell her that even the servants do not suspect the truth, I having bribed Dennis to say nothing to anyone on the subject. It's true that he had said nothing about the facts in the case, but he has given his fellow-servants to understand that his young mistress is visiting a friend out of town while her parents are absent on business," added Lorimer, parenthetically. "Praise me to her, while pretending to fear the result of my researches."

"I understand. Never fear, but I'll earn my five thousand pounds. And when I have done all this, what comes next?"

"Perhaps I'll look this way in my researches," replied the visitor, smiling. "I may come here, dis-

cover her prison, and rescue her when you are providentially absent. I may then inform her that the Travers's have left town and the house is closed. I may insinuate a thing or so against her lover. The result will be, if I know anything about women, that when I repeat my offer of marriage, as I shall do at an opportune moment, she will drop into my arms as a pleasant refuge, and I shall have the pleasure of taking her back to her friends as Mrs. Percy Lorimer."

Mrs. Hawkers assented, her views of Vivian's probable conduct agreeing with her visitor's, and he resumed:

"Notwithstanding Olcher's desire that she should be well treated, I do not wish you to err on the side of mercy. Give her plenty of dainty food, and everything she wants, but speak harshly to her, and make her life as much of a burden as possible. When I rescue her she will be doubly grateful to me if her prison has been unendurable."

"But she has hardly touched food to-day, and has asked for nothing but her freedom."

"This state of things won't last long. When she gets used to her captivity she will ask for books, to keep her mind from dwelling upon the sufferings of those whom she loves. Give them to her, and let them be tales of love and sunshine, that her grief may by contrast become utterly unbearable."

"You are cunning enough," exclaimed the ex-actress, admiringly. "You deserve the girl, and I'm sure I'll be proud to know that you are my son-in-law."

Lorimer's lip curled; but he answered by renewing his instructions, and soon after took his leave, highly gratified at the success that had so far attended his evil schemes.

Soon after his departure, Mrs. Hawkers brought a small lamp from a cupboard, lighted it, and proceeded to Vivian's chamber, going through her own room, the door of which was locked, as was also the door connecting it with the maiden's apartment.

Vivian was seated in the midst of perfect darkness, and she greeted Mrs. Hawkers only by a look of impatience.

The ex-actress cared nothing for that, setting down her lamp and taking her seat next the door of her chamber.

"Hain't eat nothing yet, eh?" she remarked, regarding the untouched tray. "Trying to starve yourself, I suppose? Well, just as you like. I'd 'bout as lieve you would die, and so get me out of the scrape I'm in on your account."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I've wrote a letter to Mr. Travers, pretending to be from you, that I was going to take you a long distance into the country, and he and his wife and that secretary fellow have all gone after you, as they suppose. Olcher's just heard of it."

Vivian clasped her hands and almost suspended her breath as she listened to this statement.

"All gone!" she murmured, after a long silence, the woman's manner not permitting her to doubt the story, which seemed almost incredible.

"Not all," was the reply. "That Lorimer fellow, who you said heard what passed between you and Olcher, he didn't quite believe the story and stayed behind. Olcher says he's now moving heaven and earth to find you, although he's desperate careful to keep your disappearance a secret from your friends. He seems to be trying to find you and take you home without anyone suspecting that there's anything wrong about your absence. Olcher says that this Lorimer has told everybody that you are visiting your friends in the country, while your folks are gone away on business."

"Heaven bless Cousin Percy!" breathed the maiden.

The ex-actress, pleased with the impression her story had made, gave at great length the contents of the letter she pretended to have written, the false trail upon which Vivian's friends had departed, the energetic efforts Lorimer was making for the maiden's recovery, and various other details that suggested themselves to her fertile mind—her remarks all tending, while affecting the contrary, to exalt Percy Lorimer in Vivian's mind, and causing her to look upon him as her possible liberator.

She made no attempt to conceal the joy with which Mrs. Hawkers had inspired her, and that personage hastened to make several harsh observations, after which she retired, locking the door behind her.

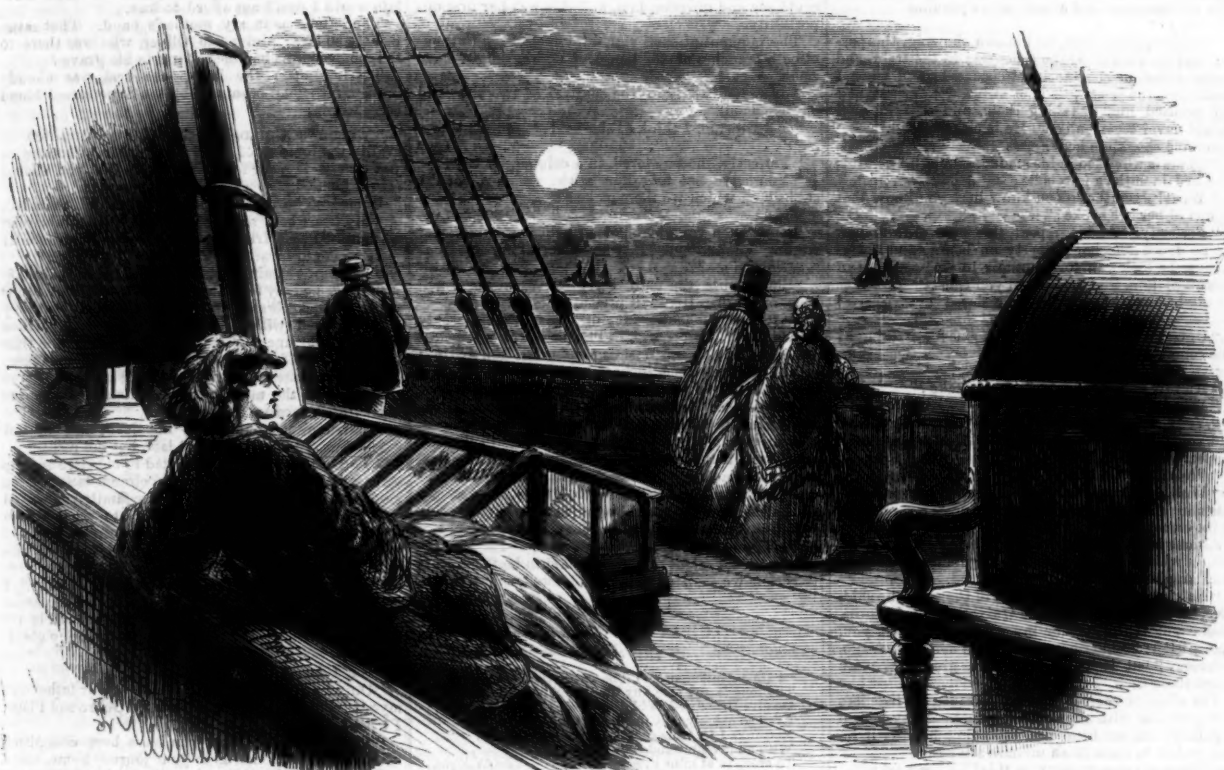
Vivian then arose and approached the table, taking from the tray some of the food thereon, with the determination to preserve her strength for any emergency that might arise.

And then she knelt and prayed fervently that Lorimer might find her and restore her to her friends, upon whose heads she invoked the tenderest blessings of heaven.

The prayer died away in a burst of tears, the first she had shed since her captivity. When her sobs had subsided she arose to her feet, with the intention of seeking her couch and needed slumbers.

But her movements were arrested by hearing the sound of voices in the adjoining chamber, and the mention of her own name caught her attention.

(To be continued.)



[MEMORY AT FAULT.]

THE WRONG DRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Golden Mask," "The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Idol," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BREAKERS A-HEAD.

So! How stands the account
Twixt me and fortune? *Alfred the Great.*
Defeat and still defeat, yet at the last—
Oh, yes, at last success must crown the whole. *Ibid.*

It was thus but the merest chance that prevented the speedy and literal fulfilment of Jacintha's prophecy as to Vivian Gower's death.

Another moment, and he would have been over the vessel's side, and at the rate at which it was going, it would have been impossible to have reversed the engines in time to have saved him, even if he had escaped the peril of the paddle-wheels.

Jerome's timely appearance on deck was wholly providential. His interposition saved the stranger's victim; but the consequences of it did not end there.

The eyes of the two men—Jerome and the stranger—met with a fierce and angry glare: but this was not all. There was not fierceness only, not anger only, there was recognition in the glance.

These men met as foes, between whom there was a deadly feud of long standing, and the coarse instincts of the hearts of both burst into flame on the instant. The stranger's desperation at the interference was for the moment overcome by incredulity. He evidently could not believe his eyes. But the instant he had satisfied himself that it was Jerome, he flew at him with tiger-like fierceness.

"Of all men—you!" he burst out, "you to come between me and—"

"Murder," said Jerome, promptly.

The stranger grew livid at the word.

"You have said it!" he shouted, in the madness of passion—"Murder!"

And as if to give effect to the cry, he fastened upon the neck of his adversary, and in a second they were down, rolling upon the deck in a deadly embrace, intensified by the deepest animosity.

Vivian Gower, hardly recovered from the attack upon himself, was powerless to interfere. But such a scene could not long be enacted on the deck of a passenger ship without attracting attention. A dozen hands rushed to the spot, and the combatants were parted by main force.

Then Jerome's presence of mind enabled him at once to make himself master of the position.

"You see," he gasped, as soon as he had recovered sufficient breath to articulate distinctly, "this man is dangerous! He is mad!"

"Mad!" repeated the stranger, contemptuously.

"You—some of you—must have seen his attack upon this gentleman—"

"Utterly unprovoked," interposed Vivian Gower.

"I believe it. Yet but for me he would have thrown him over the ship's side. And when I interfere to prevent murder, you see my reward. I tell you he is mad."

In appearance he was. Held by half-a-dozen of the crew, he struggled and writhed in their grasp, with starting eyes and swollen cheeks, while imprecations fierce and withering, burst from his lips.

"Unhand me!" he shrieked; "let me get at him! There is an old score between us, and if he be not a coward—if he be not? He is—coward and ruffian in one. He may slink from me and try to hide his despicable head. You see him—all of you—playing the gentleman with his smooth face, and curled hair, and smart clothes. He doesn't look a convict. He doesn't look a burglar. But I know him to be both. His name is—"

Before he could utter it, Jerome had darted forward, and with lightning quickness had dashed his clenched fist on the speaking lips.

It was a mistake. Consternation followed among those gathered round; but they looked into one another's faces as if inquiring whether these charges were really true.

Jerome felt his blunder, and did his best to repair it.

"Did I not say this was a madman?" he demanded. "And you hear him. I interpose to save another from the effects of his fury, and you hear how he attacks me! If I am a convict—a burglar—and the rest of it—what is this gentleman he would have thrown into the sea? Was he unworthy to sail in the same ship with this virtuous stranger? But this is nonsense. The man raves. He is dangerous. He must be secured."

The proposition met with applause, but Jerome did not quite recover his position. It was too evident that he and this violent stranger had met before—too clear that he feared some revelation from those bleeding lips which he had struck so savagely.

However, his words had this effect—they aroused the fears of those about him, and at their entreaty the captain, who had come to learn the nature of the disturbance, ordered the violent passenger to be secured

in his own cabin until the end of the short voyage. Fierce and determined, the stranger resented this, and in incoherent terms declared that he had been insulted and outraged. Vivian Gower, he persisted, had called him a thief—had declared that he had robbed a woman of her jewels, and that allegation had roused his blood and carried him beyond himself. The sight of the ruffian Jerome had, he declared, completed his exasperation. But he was not mad. Angry—but not mad.

These assertions he jerked out in screams and yells, and with a violence which only confirmed the impression that he must be deranged in mind. His desperate resistance to those who endeavoured to confine him was looked on as additional proof.

As he disappeared from the deck, Mrs. Vivian Gower, aroused by the commotion, appeared upon the scene, and, as she made towards her husband, Jerome turned and confronted her.

The meeting occasioned mutual surprise.

Jerome recognised with special satisfaction the face of the Lady Visitor to whom he had been indebted for assistance at the old house in Smithfield, while she regarded with suspicion his altered appearance. People do not rise from absolute poverty to affluence on a sudden in the usual course of events, and the lady felt this.

She felt also that the man before her was likely to have so risen rather by foul, than by fair means, and hence the coolness with which she greeted him.

But he had no scruples.

In an easy, nonchalant style, he bowed, remarking:

"We have a wonderful facility for meeting at unexpected places, madame!"

"Yes," she replied, coldly, "when last we met—"

"You did me the favour of lending me a five-pound note. Permit me to return it, with many thanks."

He drew from his breast-pocket a roll of notes, and selecting one of the amount he had named, folded it and handed it to the lady with a bow.

For the moment she hesitated at taking it, but Jerome, affecting not to notice this hesitation, turned to Vivian and addressed him:

"This fellow was saying you accused him of robbery?" he asked.

"Yes; but I did not do so. Except by inference."

"Inference! Pardon me if I don't quite understand?"

"I will explain. I was mentioning the circumstance of a lady being in peril at the railway station at Gorewood, and being rescued by some person whom she

lavishly rewarded with her watch, money and jewels. The circumstance had struck me as peculiar."

"Very!"

"It so happened that, on his own showing, this person was on the spot at the time, was in the train, and declared that no such accident occurred; and when I mentioned the jewels, he flew at me, declaring that I had accused him of taking them, and that he or I should never escape alive. He is clearly mad."

Jerome shook his head.

"There is a method in his madness though," he said; "he had Jacintha's jewels."

"What! Jacintha? You know her, you know that it was of her we spoke?"

"Perfectly. And, I repeat, this man did rob her. He no doubt has her property on board, and it was because he took you for an officer in disguise, sent in pursuit of him, that he offered you this violence. Yet he might have known that she dared not—pshaw! the brutes never reflect."

"Of course you have private reasons for arriving at this conclusion?" Vivian asked.

"Of course," was the quiet answer.

"And what step do you intend to take?"

"What step?"

"Yes. You tell us that a robbery has taken place, and you feel convinced that the thief has the stolen property with him."

"Well?"

"Well. You will naturally do something to bring this man to justice and to get the property restored to its owner."

Jerome burst into a silvery laugh. He had a good mouth, white teeth, and his face brightened amazingly as he laughed.

"Naturally, I shall do nothing of the sort," he said.

"No, no; I can't afford to be Quixotic, and Jacintha would not thank me for my pains, I say tell you. Poor girl! It cost her a pang to lose all her treasures, go, I daresay; but it would cost her a great deal more to get them back, I can tell you."

The effect of these words was to cause his listeners to regard him with utter bewilderment. They looked hopelessly on, as little understanding him as if he had spoken to them in an unknown tongue.

"There is some mystery in this?" Vivian asked.

"Yes; part of the mystery that underlies my life."

"And which has to do with Jacintha's fortunes also, and renders you intimate with the affairs of our family?" asked Vivian's wife.

"Precisely," was the reply; "but pardon me, I am forgetting my duty. I shall have my dead man doing some mischief to himself or somebody else."

In effect, while this allusion to the "dead man" was on his lips, a figure to which that term might well have been applied, appeared ascending the companion ladder, and called him by name.

It was Jasper Newton.

Fearfully emaciated and white as a ghost, he seemed to have no life except in his eyes, and they were unnaturally bright and glowing, unnaturally fiery, wild, and restless. The strange wound he had received in the duel—that wound which all the doctors declared must result in death, and which he nevertheless survived—had undermined his fine constitution, and, worse than that, the affair of the duel had affected his brain. It was not a figure of speech by which he had been called the dead man. The man that possessed him—founded on the medical opinions as to the impossibility of his living—was that he had indeed passed out of this life, and only haunted the world until the one object of his former existence was accomplished, that of avenging himself on his false love, Violet Maldon, and his treacherous friend, Albany Seymour.

At first this apprehension created some alarm; but suddenly it awakened the liveliest interest in Vivian's wife.

Altered as he was, she recognized in him the former clerk and subsequent partner in the firm of Plunkett and Colt. She remembered that it was he who informed her of Plunkett's death and of the sudden disappearance of the housekeeper and the young heir of Gorewood Place. At that time and subsequently she had questioned him on the one point of vital moment—the sex of the runaway whom Plunkett succeeded in capturing on the eve of his death. To this question he had never been able to return a direct answer. He saw the child only for a second or two—he noticed that his hair was cut in the fashion of a boy's hair; but his impression was that the dress, partially hidden under the wrappings used on the journey, was that of a girl. Amidst this contradictory state of things, however, he had expressed an opinion that it would be in his power to recognize the face whenever he saw it.

That he did subsequently see that face, when he rescued it from the hands of Dan, the tacturn, by sheer violence, Mrs. Vivian had ascertained. But on the main point she was still in the dark. Jasper

Newton had departed for the Continent before she could see and question him, and this was her first opportunity.

The moment of such signal interest to the fortunes of both branches of the house of Gower might have come.

Advancing hastily to the spectral figure, she held out her hand.

"Mr. Newton, I think?" she said; "you remember me?"

"Perfectly," he answered, in a calm, quiet tone.

"You have not forgotten when we met, nor the subject on which we then spoke?"

"No."

"Since then you have had a further opportunity of gaining information. Have you anything to communicate to me?"

"Simply that the oath I registered in life I will keep in death. He shall perish by my hand."

Startled at the irrelevancy of the answer, the lady turned away with a sigh. The man was a hopeless monomaniac. It was useless to question him farther; and thus she seemed to have once more befriended the owner of Gorewood Place.

It had once more raised a barrier, not of his making, against the revelation of his secret.

Well might those so deeply interested in the discovery groan at the disappointment. But there was not much time for reflection or dismay. The channel was nearly crossed. The cliffs of France rose up like battlements against a sapphire sky.

And as Vivian Gower stared moodily towards them, his wife muttered softly in his ear, "No matter. This time our plot is too deeply laid to be frustrated. This time we shall succeed."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CRISIS.

"I am a gentleman." I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,
Do give thee five-fold blazon. Safe! How now?
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections,
With an invincible and subtle stealth,
To creep in at mine eyes. *Twelfth Night.*

AND here let me take up the thread of my own story.

There are no words in which I can convey an idea of the gloomy life of the old house on the plain, after my return to it and Albany Seymour's final departure.

It was a prison, neither more nor less. The gloom, the monotony, the weariness, come back upon me now with a terrible reality that seems to blot out the sunshine and darken the very heavens under which I write. The years I spent in that place were taken out of my life as wholly and absolutely as if I had descended living into the grave. I existed, but it was existence without anything to make life worth the having. Existence without fellowship, without hope, without love, save as a memory, for already I had grown to regard Oliver as belonging to and swallowed up in the far past—the dim, distant, indistinct past, for which I appeared to have existed long, long ago.

Two or three times while living in this dreary waste I heard from home.

Twice my mother wrote in a very cold, formal style; but not without an undercurrent of heart and tenderness.

Once Jacintha sent me a few lines in which she bade me remember that she had not lost her interest in my welfare, and was still my friend, much as my ungrounded suspicions (in the matter of Plunkett's murder) had hurt and distressed her.

At last—it was a brilliant summer morning, and I was sitting at my barred window, gazing up into the blue heavens, as a bird might gaze longingly from its cage—a glad, joyous surprise came to me.

Rita, the vain, frivolous, but not bad-hearted Rita, entered the room with hasty steps. It was so unusual for her to move thus quickly, for the terrible monotony of the place weighed upon the spirits of all within it, and induced a listless weariness of movement, even in the youngest and gayest.—I was so surprised, I say, that I turned hastily from the window and saw a smile on her rosy face, which outshone even the brightness of her gold comb and the copper chain that encircled her neck. My surprise was increased when she held out a letter towards me.

"For you!" she said, using two words from the little English I had taught her.

For me? I could scarcely believe it. For me? My heart beat, and my cheeks flushed crimson!

Then I observed there was a deep black border to the letter, and my momentary joy was changed to alarm. I knew that the black-edged letter must tell of death. Whose death? Not my mother's—not Oliver's! No; a moment's thought convinced me that this missive did not announce to me the loss of

either of the two beings who out of the whole desolate world I could not afford to lose.

The letter was in my mother's hand. That satisfied me so far. And as to Oliver, who was there to tell me even if he had been lying in his grave?

Tearing open the letter—the seal was already broken, for it had been read by the Superior—I found these words:

"MY DEAR CHILD.—At last I am permitted to gratify the longing of my heart, and to announce to you that it is your father's pleasure that you should return home."

Home! The word dazzled my eyes! I trembled, and my heart beat so fast for a moment I could read no more. Rita's friendly hand laid on my shoulder restored me to myself.

"I cannot explain to you is writing, and, indeed, it would not be easy to make you understand the reasons which render this step practicable. Suffice it that they are associated with a mournful event—the sudden death of your uncle, Vivian Gower! For some time he has suffered from an affection of the heart, dangerous in its character: this has of late induced him to seek relief in the mild and genial climate of France; but without permanent benefit."

"A telegram announcing his death has at last reached us. It was sudden at last, but not painful."

"You can hardly be expected to experience deep sorrow at this event. Family circumstances have kept the two branches to which our family is reduced widely separated, and it is only of late years that a reconciliation has been effected between us. But of this I shall be able to speak to you when, please heaven, we meet."

"You will return to us, my dear child, at once. I have all a mother's longing to sleep you in my arms. Alas! I can scarcely hope that this feeling will be reciprocated with equal warmth. Your unhappy childhood—"

"But I dare write no more."

"Only to say that you will find us—your father and myself—alone. Jacintha has quitted Gorewood Place, I trust for ever."

"Those to whose care you have been committed have every instruction as to your journey home, and I will only add that I am impatient to welcome and embrace you. Your loving mother,

"M. G."

That night I set out for England. In a flutter of delight, I read and re-read these precious words all day, in the intervals between the hurried preparations I had to make, and it was still open in my hand when at last I took a hurried but tearful adieu of those I was about to leave for ever, and took my seat in a carriage at the door of the prison, which I had so loathed, but which seemed invested with a tender melancholy now that I was at last bidding it farewell.

Rita accompanied me on a great portion of the journey, never quitting my side until we reached the sea-port, and a berth had been secured for me in a vessel lying in the harbour. And when the steam was up, and the vessel moved slowly, slowly from its moorings, the last object on which my eyes rested was the round, fresh face of the ruddy German, and the bright glitter of her golden comb and copper chain and long, swinging ear-rings as they shone in the level rays of the setting sun.

Though I was alone, without a companion or protector, I had no fears or misgivings. The sense of freedom as we moved along through the spraying sea and under the bright heavens was delicious. I leant over the vessel's side and watched the waves leaping and cresting, and the stars as they stole forth out of the darkening sky. As it grew late the passengers for the most part retired below; but I had no desire for rest and no sense of sleep. I remained on deck, and so watched the rising of the moon, large and red as the rising sun on the horizon's verge, but growing purer and brighter as it ascended. Then the sea became molten silver, and the ship moved on like an enchanted thing, fairy-like and beautiful through the luminous air. Oh, how vividly I recall the scene in its delicious reality.

But for all its beauty, and in spite of the reviving freshness of the breeze, towards morning a drowsiness stole over me, and I sank upon a seat, and leaning my face upon my arms soon lost all consciousness of existence in the charm of slumber. Once I awoke and looked up. My eyes were dim, my eyelids heavy; but I looked across the deck and started as I did so. Two figures—two passengers—were leaning over on the opposite side. They were deeply absorbed and conversing in low whispers. In the momentary glance that I gave I recognized something familiar in the outline of these forms. I had seen them before—when? where? under what possible circumstances?

While I asked myself this question drowsiness again overcame me, and when I next awoke, the sun was shining warm upon my head, and there were an

usual bustle and commotion on board the vessel. We had reached England—were at the landing-pier—and some of the passengers were already ashore.

In the first few moments I had a difficulty in recalling myself to a sense of my position. When I did so I remembered the figures I had seen in the night, and looked eagerly round in the hope of recognizing friends under whose care I might place myself.

'Twas in vain.

My eager, earnest eyes only encountered strange faces, and I quitted the vessel alone.

A long, uneventful railway journey brought me to Gorewood. The little station, covered with roses white and red, had a pleasant look of home about it, and seemed to welcome back the wanderer. As I alighted my eyes eagerly glanced along the platform, and there, to my inexpressible delight, I beheld a tall, noble-looking woman, richly attired in deep mourning, in whom I at once recognized Lady Gower, my beloved mother.

She had come to meet me, no doubt; but if so, why did she regard me so carelessly as I stepped from the carriage?

Her eyes were upon me, yet she betrayed no emotion.

My heart sank within me as I saw this—I hesitated, shrank back, and burst into tears. Then I saw that she came towards me, and while the words "My child! my darling!" rang in my ears, I was clasped to her bosom.

In the fulness of my heart I had forgotten the years that had passed and the change that had come over me. She too had looked for her child and had failed to recognize it in a woman!

But, in the blissful moments that succeeded, all this was forgotten. The drive to Gorewood Place passed in an ecstasy of mutual endearment. Until she had parted with her only child the mother had never known how dear it was to her, while I, painfully conscious of the ban my sex placed on me, had been ignorant of the wealth of affection I had so rashly sacrificed in quitting the home to which I now so joyfully returned.

And how familiar it all seemed! The hall where I had watched on the night of the burglary—the great staircase—the iron-studded door leading to the tower—the superb suites of rooms opening one into the other, with their rich draperies and gorgeous furniture, and, above all, the suite which had been devoted to my use, and which Jacintha had so jealously guarded—all were there as I had seen them in my dreams many and many a night in my prison in another land. And with the old place came back the old feelings: love for my mother, dread of Sir Gower, and a shrinking from the intrusive gaze of all others.

The feeling with regard to Sir Gower was, however, on this occasion soon dissipated.

He was seated in what was called the Great Drawing-room, and as we entered he rose and hurried forward, both hands extended towards me. Then I found myself clasped to his breast with a fervour most remarkable in one so cold and distant. And when I looked up into his face I saw an expression there very different to any it had ever worn before in my recollection. Happiness, gaiety, lightness of heart, everything that had before been wanting, seemed to light up those sternly moulded features.

This was indeed a change, and in the happiness it afforded me I forgot all else. For hours I sat between the parents from whose hearts I had been so long estranged, and felt as if a new existence had opened to me—an existence in which love and tenderness and all the softer feelings of the heart were to shape forth an Elysium.

On one point Sir Gower was never weary of expressing his delight.

"How beautiful she has grown!" he exclaimed, again and again, "and a woman, positively a woman!"

"Ah, if she could only be brought out like others of her age!" my mother sighed; "if she could only be presented!"

"Even that may be possible in time," Sir Gower replied, hopefully.

Her ladyship shook her head, and a desponding look came into her face.

"Society would raise an outcry against us such as we could never endure," she said.

"Well, well," was the reply, "what is impossible in this country is easy elsewhere, and, thank heaven, there are more lands than one."

Her ladyship was about to return some reply, when the entrance of a servant in livery caused us all to look towards him.

He stepped forward and whispered in Sir Gower's ear.

The words, whatever they were, caused the baronet to turn deadly pale and to utter a cry of dismay.

"What!" he exclaimed, starting back. "Here! He here?"

"And, as you said, sir, he were never—"

"To be admitted! No, no! This is a trick. This is a plot. Close—fasten—that door!"

The servant obeyed.

Lady Gower rushed towards her husband.

"Anselm?" she cried, in an inquiring tone.

He passed his hand across his brow, as if stunned and unable to master himself for the instant.

"What has happened—oh, what, what is it?" her ladyship demanded.

"He is—alive!" he faltered.

"He? Vivian?"

"Yes."

"And here?"

"Here."

"It was a ruse then? A trap—oh, Anselm, is it possible?"

She caught at his arm; but inspired with sudden energy, he threw her off.

"The girl," he cried out; "take her from this room. Hide her, anywhere—conceal her. I will receive these people."

Agitated almost beyond the power of complying, my mother seized my hand and dragged me from the room by a door opposite that by which the servant was standing. It communicated with the corridor out of which the sleeping-apartments opened, but we did not retire so far. We waited where, in the gloom of the corridor, we could command a view of what happened.

When we had quitted the room, Sir Gower gave instructions that the visitors should be admitted. He winced as he did so, fancying that there was something insolent and triumphant in the look of the servant, whom he had been obliged to take into his confidence so far, and to a proud man like my father there could be nothing more repugnant than to be indebted to one of his own dependants.

This feeling, however, was swallowed up in the strong sense of consternation which the announcement had occasioned.

It was with difficulty that he could command his features sufficiently to receive the unwelcome visitors with even a show of courtesy.

They entered slowly, Vivian resting on the arm of his wife, whose face, wan and wasted as it was, glowed with the light of secret exultation.

"You have not received my letter!" was her first exclamation, as she saw the look on the baronet's face.

"No," he answered, coldly.

"It is no wonder that you look so astounded then," she replied. "Your poor cousin must come upon you like one from the grave."

With a great effort the baronet forced himself to speak.

"What is the object of this folly—this—this trickery?" he burst out.

It was Vivian himself who replied.

"Anselm!" he exclaimed, "is this kind? Is this the greeting you give a kinsman restored to you from the brink of the grave? When my poor wife telegraphed my death to you, I was given over by my physician: it was supposed I had passed away, but I recovered, and when I return to England alive and in improved health, this is the reception I meet with."

"You are naturally surprised—" Mrs. Vivian began.

"Surprised! That is not the word. How is it possible that one should receive a man from his grave without consternation? You wrote me, you say; would to heaven I had received that letter! This is a shock I shall not soon recover."

He was, in truth, greatly moved, and as he leaned his arm upon the mantel-piece, supporting his brow with one hand, his whole frame quivered.

The visitors indulged in some general remarks of an apologetic character, but he did not heed them.

"You must excuse me," he said, after a few minutes, during which they had taken seats, "but I must prepare my lady for this surprise. The shock of it may overpower her."

"And she has already had one trial of her feelings to-day, has she not?" asked the venomous little woman.

"Trial!" Sir Gower echoed.

"In the return of her child, I mean."

"Ah, you have heard, then—"

"That the—dear thing, was to return to-day. Yes, safe and well, I hope? And grown, of course, grown out of knowledge, I daresay. Perhaps we can see her ladyship and the young heir at once? Or do you think they would be unequal to the trial of their feelings?"

Sir Gower listened, looking utterly helpless and incapable of reply. He knew not what to do or to say. The emergency had come upon him so unexpectedly, so in the nature of a blow, which had half-stunned and left him without a resource.

To introduce the daughter whom he had so long succeeded in passing off on the world as the son and heir, in right of whom he retained his title and estates, was impossible.

To refuse to do so was only to lead to an open rupture, the result of which would be an immediate appeal to the law.

What was to be done?

My mother clutched my hand with feverish intensity as, hidden in the gloom, beyond the half-opened door, we overheard, and in part saw, what passed.

It was a moment of agony.

The baronet's distress was so great that we could see the great drops of perspiration start on his brow and roll down his haggard cheeks.

"I will at least convey to my lady, as gently as I can, the fact of your strange and, may I say, startling presence here. Excuse me."

He rose, bowed, and moved towards the door.

A meaning look passed between Vivian Gower and his wife. Then, as the result of it, she started up, and, walking on tip-toe so that her step was absolutely noiseless, she proceeded to follow my father.

We saw her. The light from the open window fell on her face, and showed that it was animated by the deepest cunning and treachery, while over it there played a smile of triumph sickening to witness.

Unconscious of what was passing behind him, the baronet quitted the room.

He came out into the darkness, and the door, released from his hand, swung to, but did not close.

The woman's hand prevented that.

In his abstraction—in the intensity of his perturbation—he did not regard this.

He moved on towards us, followed as he moved.

We saw this, and a cry rose to our lips.

The impulse that was upon us to utter an exclamation of warning was almost too strong to be repressed; I felt my mother's heart beat, and her fingers clutched at my shoulders till the pain was well nigh beyond endurance. I saw that she stretched forth her right hand mechanically to save him from the consequences of his folly—the discovery that was imminent, that was inevitable.

"Anselm!" she shrieked at last.

He looked up, startled and bewildered. Then he stopped, but did not turn his head.

Had he done so he would have seen two figures which suddenly entered the drawing-room by the open window, and would have noticed that one of these started forward and laid a hand on the shoulder of Vivian Gower's wife!

"Pardon me, madam," she cried.

The astounded woman turned and confronted her with the face of a Gorgon.

"What! why, why is this?" fell from her lips, incoherently.

In the intensity of her dismay and exasperation, she had no preception of the words she uttered.

"You are desirous of seeing the young heir?" the woman returned.

"Yes."

"He is here."

She pointed as she spoke to the room visible through the open door, and there we perceived that Vivian Gower had risen and was gazing mute with astonishment at the tall, elegant figure of a young man who stood with an easy, negligent air before him.

In the bewilderment of the moment I failed to understand the full import of all that was happening. I only knew that the woman who had come in by the window to the rescue was Jacintha, and that the youth to whom she pointed was my boy-lover—Oliver!

(To be continued.)

A new mode of smuggling foreign tobacco has been discovered by the Customs House authorities in Paris. Some large blocks of stone, weighing about a hundredweight, having arrived from Switzerland, it was found on inspection that they were hollow, and that they were stuffed full of cigars of the finest brands.

How overpowering are the mingled murmur, clang, tramp, and rattle of a body of troops, with all their footsteps, horses, arms, artillery, and varied voices! How insignificant compared with this uproar the speech of a single mouth! Yet the whisper of one mouth sets in motion and drives on to death and devastation twenty such bodies, comprising, perhaps, a hundred thousand human lives.

ACCLIMATIZATION IN NEW ZEALAND.—It appears from the annual report of the Acclimatization Society in the Canterbury Settlement that a large amount of preliminary work has been got through with the view to the formation of zoological and botanical gardens, and that ponds have been formed for the artificial breeding and rearing of the expected salmon and trout, the society having contributed a sum of £300 towards the late experiment of sending out the ova from England. A further sum of £150 has lately been forwarded to London for the purchase of small birds to check the devastating increase of caterpillars

and insects in that colony; and as an additional means of obtaining desirable introductions, a collection has been made by the society of the native birds and plants for the purposes of exchange. As New Zealand affords so wide a field for objects of a botanical character especially, highly useful for culture in England, many gentlemen will no doubt avail themselves of the opportunity of making exchanges.

SCIENCE.

It is stated that New Jersey is sinking at the rate of about a foot in 100 years.

A TON of coal yields about 10,000 cubic feet of gas while one cord of wood produces about 98,000 ft.

THERE are carp in the lake at Fontainebleau which, from certain marks, are believed to be 300 years old.

It is stated that the Mississippi is gradually drying up. The "June rise," once as certain as the coming of the month, has entirely ceased.

THE heat which would raise 1 lb. of water through any number of degrees of temperature would heat 9 lb. of iron to the same extent.

It is stated that a mass of the best cannel coal of the size of a whale contains more oil than there is in that fish.

SODIUM AMALGAMATION.

TAKE a clean tumbler and fill it about two-thirds full of clear water; then drop a little finely pulverized metallic powder upon the water. Gold dust or bronze (such as printers use, and nearly every printer has it), or silver powder will answer, provided it be sufficiently fine. Then stir it smartly with the handle of a spoon or the blade of a knife. It will be seen that the powder will not sink in the water; but, on the contrary, the more it is stirred the more obstinately it keeps at the top. When you have sufficiently demonstrated to your own satisfaction the almost impossibility of sinking the metal, which, being heavier than the water, by the laws of gravity should sink, drop into the tumbler a little caustic potash or soda, and stir a little, the powder will then be seen to leave the top, and in a short time settle at the bottom of the water.

Atmospheric air adheres with great tenacity to any highly polished surface, and is very difficult to displace. It preserves a knife blade by preventing the moisture from getting to it to oxidize it. Dip a knife blade or a razor into water, draw it out and you will find that it has not been wet—a film of air interposed between it and the water. So with each particle of dust which you placed on the water in the tumbler. Notwithstanding its being so exceedingly fine, it is surrounded with a layer of atmospheric air as thick as that on the surface of a knife blade.

The particle being round and smooth, no mechanical means which you can use will displace the air so that the water can get to it, and the air being lighter than water acts as a balloon to sustain the piece of metal. If you agitate it in the water with a spoon, or force it down by any other means, the air will stick to its piece of metal, and as soon as you let it alone it will rise to the surface. How it is that the alkali makes the air let go its hold on the metal is difficult to tell. The experiment shows that it does so, and the metal sinks.

It is stated that the great oyster-beds in Long Island Sound, America, originated in the foundering, in 1841, of a schooner, laden with small oysters which were being transported to an artificial bed.

SWEDEN and Norway are slowly rising out of the sea at the rate of from one-tenth to one-half per annum. The west coast of Greenland is gradually sinking.

THE greatest elevation yet attained by man without leaving the surface in a balloon is 19,000 ft. M. Boussingault and Colonel Hall ascended Chimborazo to that height.

OAKEN barrels may be prevented from colouring spirit by dissolving one part of ammonia alum and two parts of sulphate of iron in one hundred parts. Well wash the casks with this solution, boiling hot, and allow them to stand twenty-four hours. Then rinse out the casks well, dry them, and finally give them a washing with a thin solution of silicate of soda.

THREAD FROM COTTON-PLANT STALKS.—An ingenious person in New Orleans has been engaged in making thread from the stalks of the cotton-plant. It is very fine and strong, and looks very much like flax, being nearly as soft and pliable. He proposes to make this thread into cloth, which he says will be as strong and durable as that made from cotton itself. Forty pounds of thread can be made from one hundred and twenty pounds of stalk. A new factory will soon be established for the manufacture of cloth from this substance. The discovery is not a new one. It has

been known for several years that there was a fibrous substance in the cotton stalk which very much resembles flax, but it has never before been put to practical use. Should this prove successful, it will double the value of the cotton plantations in the South.

THE GREAT WESTMINSTER CLOCK.—Mr. Ellis, of the Royal Observatory, says, there is no clock at Greenwich that keeps time so well as Mr. Denison's clock in the tower of the Houses of Parliament. It reports its own rate automatically twice a day to Greenwich by electric telegraph, a test to which no other public clock has ever been subjected. Persons taking time from it should remember that exact Greenwich time is indicated by the first stroke of the great hour bell, and also by the first stroke of any of the quarter chimes, except those at the hour.

NEW METHOD OF OXYDIZING LIQUIDS.

MR. JAMES HARGREAVES has recently devised an apparatus for the oxidation, by air alone, of bodies dissolved in water, which constitutes a noble and very ingenious application of the injector principle. It was devised for use in the soda manufacture, for the oxidation into sulphate of the sulphide of sodium contained in the complex solution obtained by the lixiviation of "black ash." This oxidation had previously been effected by means of nitrate of sodium, which is a very costly material, the necessity for the use of which, for the purpose in question, Mr. Hargreaves's contrivance entirely obviates.

Mr. Hargreaves puts the crude liquor into a vessel furnished with a false bottom, which false bottom is perforated with numerous small holes, and has inserted in it, as its centre, the lower end of a pipe which passes up to a little above the top of the vessel, and terminates at its upper end in a throat, immediately above which is fixed a jet connected with a boiler, the steam in which should be kept at a pressure of about 40 lb. per square inch. Steam from this jet rushes into the funnel-shaped throat and then down the pipe, carrying with it into the space between the bottom of the vessel and the false bottom very large quantities of air, which then issue through the holes in the false bottom and rise through the solution, "causing," says Mr. Hargreaves, "an intense commotion," and coming into contact with so large a surface of the solution as very rapidly to oxidize all oxidizable matters contained in it. The heat communicated to the solution by the steam greatly facilitates this process of oxidation.

Mr. Hargreaves states that a large charge of crude soda solution may have all the sulphide in it completely oxidized by this method in from four to five hours.

THE Americans appear to be determined to bid high for the possession of a formidable artillery. By the last accounts from the other side of the Atlantic, we have been informed that a monster gun has been successfully cast, which, with a charge of about 140 lb. of powder, will throw a shot weighing 11 cwt.

YANKES OUT-WITTED.—The *Liliputian* brig, the *Vision*, of six tons, sailed from New York on the 25th June, 1864, ostensibly for the foolhardy purpose of crossing the Atlantic. As she never reached our shores, it had been supposed that the vessel and its owner were wrecked. It appears, however, that the voyage across the Atlantic was only a subterfuge, for at the taking of Wilmington by the Federals, she was discovered quietly lying up there, having run the blockade with a cargo of quinine.

WHO BUILT THE ITALIAN IRON-CLAD?—The result of the late engagement between the Austrian and Italian fleets has given rise to controversy as to the comparative merits of French and English armour-plating. The French assert that the *Re d'Italia*, the iron-clad sunk by the Austrians, was built and sheathed in England with English iron. "Observer," in the *Times*, replies that that vessel was built in America and plated at La Spezia with plates rolled in Italy. "B," another correspondent of the *Times*, dating from Sheffield, says that the plates of both the *Re d'Italia* and the *Paletro*, the two vessels sunk off Lissa, were French plates, and that the English-plated *Affondatore* successfully resisted the Austrian shot.

YOUTHFUL LOVE-MAKING.—We danced the Capello, and Ciarletto Carraeciolo was my partner. He danced not so well as the Conte di Malatesta, but he hath more wit. He told me a story of two young lovers at Verona, Romeo Montecchi and Giulietta Capuletti, who fell in love with each other at a ball in the house of Giulietta's father. He said when he heard it he could not believe love should be so sudden, but that since he had come into the palace that day he had become so enamoured of a lady that nothing could exceed it, though he dared not whisper her name. He asked me if I had loved anyone yet. I said that when I was at Nancy, Pierre de Luxembourg had said he would be my knight, and fight

against all such as should deny me to be the fairest princess in the whole world. This made me love him very much; for I liked to have a cavalier which would kill all those who said I was not fair. Then Ciarletto said he would fight for me, and die for me, if I would love him. But I said I would not, for that he was not a king; which made him so angry he would not dance with me any more.—*A Stormy Life; or, Queen Margaret's Journal, in The Month.*

STATISTICS.

THE public income of the year ending the 30th day of June, 1866, amounted to £67,726,436 0s. 7d., and was derived from the following sources: Customs, £21,369,000; Excise, £20,067,000; stamps, £9,553,000; taxes (land and assessed), £3,421,000; property tax, £5,777,000; Post-office, £4,850,000; Crown lands (net), £321,000; and miscellaneous, £2,868,436 0s. 7d.

INDIA-RUBBER AND GUTTA-PERCHA.—The amount of caoutchouc or india-rubber imported into the United Kingdom seems to be steadily increasing. The sum at which the caoutchouc imported in 1865 is valued is greater than any other preceding return, viz., £530,538. In 1854 it was only £250,362, and in 1857 and 1858 it averaged as low as £180,000. The importation of that analogous resin, gutta-percha, has also increased largely. Although the amount imported in 1856 was valued at only £32,228, in the year 1864 no less than £275,000 worth entered the kingdom. This is the largest amount to which the importation has yet attained, and there is no doubt that it was abnormally excessive, as although in the other two preceding years, 1862 and 1863, the imports of gutta-percha reached the respective values of £195,000 and £225,000, they fell to but £160,565 in 1865.

VITAL STATISTICS.—Official returns now completed for the year 1864 present the following results:—The number of children born in England in the year was 3-564 to every 100 of the estimated population; in France, 2-621; in Austria, 4-043; in Italy, 3-793; in Spain, 3-812. The mortality of the year was 2-386 per cent. on the estimated population in England, 2-172 in France, 3-016 in Austria, 2-952 in Italy, and 3-064 in Spain. Both birth-rate and death-rate were, as usual, higher in Italy, Spain, and Austria than in England. In France the birth-rate is always considerably lower than in England, and the death-rate commonly higher; but in 1863 and 1864 the death-rate was higher in England than in France, the state of the public health in those years being worse than usual in England, and better than usual in France. In the eight years 1857-64 the annual death-rate of England averaged 2-234 per cent., and of France 2-315 per cent., including in both cases the deaths of soldiers abroad.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON has signed the Internal Revenue Bill, which takes effect this month. The tax on cotton is fixed at 3c. per lb.

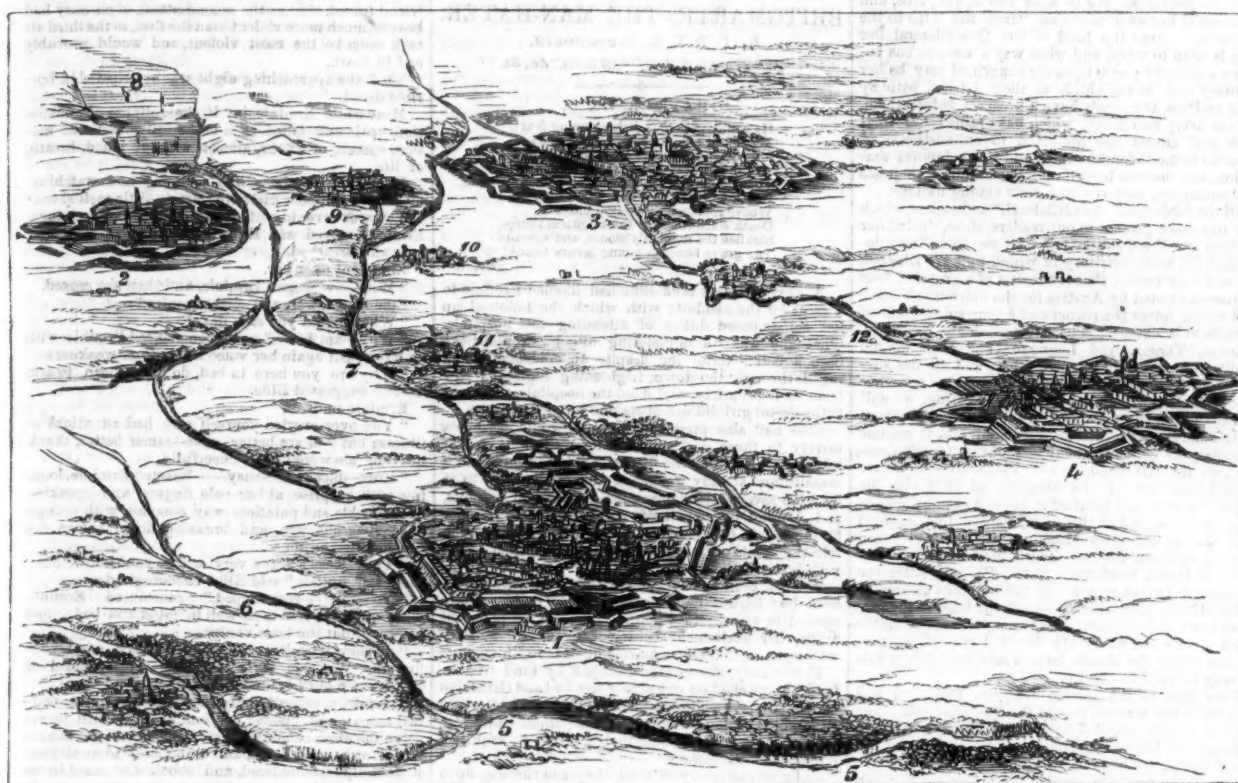
It is said that the Atlantic Telegraph Company make as much as £2,000 a day, and doubtless as much at night, for the messages from New York at ten at night mean four in the afternoon here, and will prove to them for once that the English nation is more go-ahead than the Yankee.

DECAY OF TREES IN THE LONG WALK OF WINDSOR PARK.—During the last few weeks a large number of branches of the fine elms which compose the avenue of trees in Windsor Great Park, known as the Long Walk, have fallen, owing, it is thought, to decay of the limbs.

It is rumoured that General M'Mahon is about to be sent by the Emperor Napoleon to the Prussian Court, to arrange a betrothal between the Prince Imperial, aged twelve years, and the daughter of the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, who is four years old. The rumour is said to be very generally credited in France.

THE Viceroy of Egypt has determined to abolish polygamy in his family. Henceforth the viceroys will only be able to have one family. They will only be able to divorce her in the case that the wife shall not give them a male child. If at the moment of the divorce the wife should be *enceinte*, and she should have a son, the divorce will be void.

THE Lords Justices have had before them a motion to commit two daughters and a son-in-law of a lunatic to prison, for having offered by advertisement a reward to any person who would procure the liberation of their father from a private lunatic asylum, in which he was confined by the direction of the court. One of the delusions of the lunatic is that he was a candidate for Bolton at the last election, and that he voted for himself. The daughters and son-in-law having expressed their regret for their conduct, they were discharged.



1. Mantua. 2. Peschiera. 3. Verona. 4. Legnago. 5. River Po. 6. River Oglio. 7. River Mincio. 8. Lago de Garda.
9. St. Giorgio. 10. Vallegio. 11. Villafranca. 12. River Adige.

[PLAN OF THE QUADRILATERAL OF FORTRESSES IN VENETIA.]

THE CONTINENTAL WAR.

It has been said of a great poet that he "awoke one morning suddenly to find himself famous." May not the same be said of Prussia, which, from the status of little more than the chief of the second-rate European kingdoms, has so suddenly, by a few brilliant victories, become a domineering Power in Europe, and that, too, despite and to the surprise of the great military Powers of Russia and France? A war, sharp, short, and sanguinary, is, let us hope, concluded by a treaty which is to re-settle Central Europe—create a great German nationality and an almost undivided Italy. By our French neighbours it has been called, with some truth, a "war of ambition;" but, even so, we are reminded of the old and homely maxim, that when "certain persons fall out, honest men get their rights." So let us hope that by that *rara avis in terram*, a treaty honestly adhered to by the conflicting parties, the large-hearted German people, on one side, will be benefited by the removal of their petty despots and the consolidation of their Fatherland; and, on the other, that Austria, driven within its natural boundaries, will also, by consolidation and compactness, give the breath of liberty and political freedom to the nationalities which compose its entirety, but which hitherto have been at enmity with its head and chief, the Austrian Emperor. If this prove the case, and the treaty be not, as most treaties have been, made, like the proverbial pie-crust, only to be broken, then the blood that has been shed, costly and sad as it has been to the belligerents, will not have been in vain, as it will add to the fructification of the liberties of future generations.

At present—and who shall foretell the future?—it is all *coulour de rose* with Prussia; she is mistress of Germany, and Austria, besides ceding the territories an account of which we have given in preceding articles, is humiliated so far that she, or properly speaking the people, as the price of peace will have to pay to Prussia seventy-five millions of francs, the mediation of France only having reduced it to that sum from two hundred millions of francs, the amount at first demanded by Prussia. How avaricious Prussia has been in her pecuniary demands we recently showed in our account of the proceedings of the Prussian generals in Frankfurt.

As we have said, at present it is all *coulour de rose* with Prussia, and the peace has been, or is to be

brought about by the Emperor Napoleon. But what commission does the Imperial mediator require? One of his journals says:

"It is a great result for France, having stopped this war at the moment when it might have been extended in a way menacing to all Europe. The true victory of the Emperor is his having appeased ambitions, the shock between which was a cause of such profound perturbation. But if the Emperor has the honour of evoking peace, the responsibility of the conditions which are to regulate it, and the effects it may produce, will fall on those who are about to conclude it."

We have hinted at a commission desired by the Imperial mediator. Well, the preliminaries of peace being settled, he has put forth his claims, and they are, the restoration of the territories in all or in part held by France in 1814. These claims we will endeavour to state as briefly as possible.

By the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, to which we have heretofore alluded, the boundaries of France laid down in Paris in 1814 were changed. All that France was deprived of was the commanding military position about Landau, and a slice of country on the Belgian frontier.

Now, the country included in a line drawn from the Rhine, and passing north of Landau and Sarrelouis to the Sarre, is one of great military importance. Possession of it secures to the Germans a good line of operations against Strasburg, and if France gets it, she will not only cover Strasburg by Landau and the lines of the Lauter and the Queich, but she will have a good entrance into Rhenish Prussia. The country required by the French is at present held by Prussia and Bavaria; but Prussia alone is in a position to resist its seizure. The question is, therefore, whether by virtue of some secret understanding, or from a feeling that it would not be desirable to fight France until Germany is consolidated under Prussian rule, Prussia will agree to surrender the country demanded. Upon this, notwithstanding the present promise of European quiet, turns the question of ultimate peace or war. It is not open to us to believe that, if the demand has been made and rejected, France will not fight; for the Emperor could not afford, in the present temper of the French, to sit still under such a snub.

The other piece of territory demanded to complete the restoration of the frontier of 1814 is a part of the kingdom of Belgium. It is that large nook or

rounded projection which lies between the Meuse, near Givet, and Charlemont, and the Sambre at Jeumont, near Maubeuge. Except in so far as it brings Givet and Metz into direct communication with Maubeuge and Lille, and so completes the line of fortified frontier without a break, it is of small military importance. It is full of woods, however, and so far would be as useful to France as it is to Belgium. On the whole, possession of it would confer greater advantages on France, as opposed to Belgium, than possession of it confers upon Belgium as opposed to France.

It stands to reason that the Allies in 1815 would not have taken these territories from France out of mere sport. They must have intended, and they did intend, to weaken her immensely strong frontier so far. Consequently, if France should recover possession of these districts excised in 1814, she will be that much the stronger as opposed to Germany. We have spoken only of the military gain. The political gain is not less, but more. The recovery of these territories, like the recovery of Savoy and Nice, will be a triumph of Bonapartism. To the Emperor personally they will be most precious, for they will enable him to allay the dangerous passion very visible in the French nation at present, and caused by the success of the Prussians in expelling Austria from all intermixture with German affairs, and in laying the foundation of German unity. The Emperor knows that a small but important acquisition on the Rhine, and the getting back of a bit of Belgium, will help more than the seizure of Mont Blanc and the maritime Alps to secure the foundations of his dynasty.

What Germans and Europe will think of the political morality which underlies this daring proceeding we shall learn in good time. If Germany rejects the demand, we shall have war; and if she accepts it, we shall only have a truce, for Prussia means German unity, and France means German dissension.

Whatever, however, may be the designs of the Emperor of France for the aggrandizement of his country and dynasty, he undoubtedly sowed those seeds the fructification of which has proved the unity of Italy. Italy now, ultra-ambitious as she is, has little to desire but some extension in the Tyrol, and perhaps the Eternal City, Rome, for her capital. Still she has (sentimentally, and sentimentally only) reason to complain that her present greatness has been forced upon her. What she was until recently she was made by France, what she is now she owes to Prussia.

cia. Nevertheless, she is what she is, viz., free, and mistress of her own destinies, "from the Alps to the Adriatic." Over the forts of the Quadrilateral her flag is soon to wave, and what was a menace has become a security; and, however chagrined may be her military and naval chiefs at their defeats, both by land and sea, the people have a prospect before them, for the army and navy, which has drained her treasure and almost her life-blood to exhaustion, may soon be reduced considerably; and if she ignores ambition, and devotes herself and her children to peace and commerce, may rise to a state among nations.

Of the far-famed "Quadrilateral," a sketch of which we this week present to our readers, since, during our articles on the Continental war, we have fully described the whole territory in which they are situated, we will only repeat, that it consists of a group of four fortresses erected by Austria for the defence of Venice, and which forms the corners of a four-sided space of considerable extent. These fortresses are, Peschiera, Mantua, Verona, and Legnago; and their mutual position in relation to each other and to the surrounding territory will be seen at once by reference to our sketch, which, by way of elucidating, we will add that, after the war of 1859, the Austrian province of Lombardy was ceded to Piedmont, and it became necessary to define the boundary of the Austrian empire, on the one hand, and of Piedmont—or, as we should now say, of the kingdom of Italy—on the other. Rivers and mountains are the natural boundaries of states, and in this instance the line selected was that of the river Mincio, which will be seen marked upon our sketch. The Mincio flows from the Lake of Garda southward to the Po, the latter the greatest of Italian rivers. At the northern extremity of the Mincio, just where it leaves the lake, is the fortified town of Peschiera; and twenty-one miles southward on its course is the fortified city of Mantua, around which the Mincio forms a lake, and then winds its way onward to the Po.

This line of the Mincio between Peschiera and Mantua is the western line of the Quadrilateral. The eastern line is bounded by Verona on the north and Legnago on the south, the river Adige flowing between the two, a distance of twenty-three miles. On the south the river Po divides the Austrian territory from the provinces of the Italian kingdom.

THE plague of locusts has extended from Algeria to France. One of the most extensive farmers of the vicinity of Roanne had a field of locurine, extending over 160 acres, entirely destroyed by a flight of these destructive insects. There remains no sign of the crop above ground; the roots of the plants alone exist. It is to be hoped the locusts will not take a fancy to the neighbouring vineyards.

PARENTAL EXAMPLE.—Your children will be the more animated to vigour, perseverance, and self-dependence, the more they witness your exertions to provide for your future welfare. There are few who can witness the daily display of parental and provident care without having the desire created within them of doing something for themselves. "A thrifty father," says a Hindoo proverb, "may have an extravagant son, but a diligent father rarely has an idle son."

WHY DO WE SHAKE HANDS?—Why do we shake hands at all? It is a very old-fashioned way of indicating friendship. We read in the Book of books that Jehu said to Jehonadab, "Is thy heart right as my heart is with thine heart? If it be give me thine hand." And it is not merely an old-fashioned custom. It is a natural one as well. It is the contact of sensitive and magnetic surfaces through which there is, in something more than a figurative sense, an interchange of feeling. The same principal is illustrated in another of our modes of greeting. When we wish to reciprocate the warmer feelings, we are not content with the contact of the hands, we bring the lips into service. A shake of the hands suffices for friendship, among undemonstrative Anglo-Saxons, at least; but a kiss is a token of a more tender affection.

MARRIAGE OF EMINENT PERSONS.—"People about to marry," who wish to know the proper age, are referred to the following incidents:—Adam and Eve, 6; Shakespeare, 18; Ben Jonson, 21; Franklin, 24; Mozart, 25; Dante, Kepler, Fuller, Johnson, Burke, Scott, 26; Tycho Brahe, Byron, Washington, Bonaparte, 27; Penn and Sterne, 28; Linnaeus and Nelson, 29; Burns, 30; Chaucer, Hogarth, and Peel, 32; Wordsworth and Davy, 33; Aristotle, 36; Sir William Jones and Wellington, 37; Wilberforce, 38; Luther, 42; Addison, 44; Wesley and Young, 47; Swift, 49; Buffon, 55; Old Parr, last time, 120. If Adam and Eve married before they were a year old, and the veteran Parr buckled with a widow at 120, bachelors and spinsters may wed at any age they like, and find shelter under great names for either early or late marriages.

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXXI.

He came, with that disheartening fear
Which all who love beneath the sky
Feel when they gaze on what is dear—
The dreadful thought that it must die!
That dreadful thought which comes
Into man's happiest hours and homes,
Whose melancholy boding flings
Death's shadow o'er the brightest things,
Sickles the maiden's bloom, and spreads
The grave beneath young lovers' heads!

MOORE.

A few chapters back Elsie had likened Erminie to a saint for the assiduity with which she followed up her self-imposed duties of attending the hospital. That she was "a ministering angel" would have been a better term, for despite an epidemic which raged through the town, frightening high and low from their property, and filled the hospitals, the kind, enthusiastic girl did not abate one jot of her duties.

Elsie had also predicted that she would become a martyr to those duties, and Elsie was right, for at length Erminie took the disease. This acting upon a constitution already weakened and predisposed to it by a too severe attendance upon the hospital patients, and a mind overwhelmed with anxiety as to her brother's fate (for she had heard that he had fallen into the hands of the robber band), brought her to the very brink of the grave.

She had been delirious for days, but anxious as had been her friends during that period, their anxiety seemed to culminate when, by the aid of powerful drugs, her excitement became calmed, and she lay white and motionless as marble upon her pillow.

Fortunately, she was surrounded by kind friends, for Elsie watched on one side of her bed and Catherine on the other, while Major Fielding and Captain Ethel, in their keen anxiety for the patient and desire to render assistance should their services be required, remained in the library.

Imagine the agony of their suspense the day upon which the turning-point of the disease would happen had arrived.

Major Fielding and Captain Ethel forbore to go out, even for a walk.

Dr. Burney came three times in the course of that day.

Major Fielding and his daughter asked the physician many questions concerning the nature of the sufferer's illness and the chances of her recovery, and they received answers from him which were intended to be encouraging, but which were really depressing.

Miss Rosenthal's brain and nervous system were very much affected, he said. The disease was paroxysmal in its tendency. She was now composed, and if a reaction into fever and delirium could be prevented, she would do well.

This was all the satisfaction they could get from her medical attendant.

Ah, "if."

Every means, short of drugging her into the sleep of death with sedatives and opiates, were taken to prevent a relapse into her fearful phrensy.

Elsie sat by the bed all day and all night, and administered all the medicines with her own hands, and kept ice to the head and mustard to the feet and wrists of her patient.

But all this was in vain, or attended with only a partial success.

Towards midnight Erminie's cheeks and lips began to flush; she moved restlessly, and muttered in her sleep.

Elsie renewed the medicine, the ice and the mustard, but with little effect.

The evil symptoms increased rapidly, and before morning Erminie was again, with blazing eyes and burning cheeks, raving and tossing in an agony of fever and phrensy.

In the extremity of terror, Elsie despatched first her father and then Captain Ethel, who were both watching the night out in the library, to fetch the physician.

But Dr. Burney happened to be with a lady patient whom he could not leave abruptly, and so it followed that the sun rose before he made his appearance by Erminie's bedside.

A fearful, a terrible vision, met him there. The beautiful and angelic girl seemed to be turned into a raging and foaming demoniac; and it required the united efforts of Elsie and Catherine to hold her down on her bed.

Violent remedies had to be resorted to now to allay the frightful cerebral excitement—cupping, leeching and bleeding were tried in turn; and in reducing the sufferer to calmness, they almost reduced her to death.

And her medical attendant knew, and her anxious friend feared, that as the second attack of phrensy had been so much more violent than the first, so the third attack must be the most violent, and would probably end in death.

Thus the approaching night was anticipated in horrible dread.

Meanwhile Erminie lay in the collapse of exhaustion—pale and faded as a broken lily—without motion, speech, or colour, almost without blood, breath, or life.

From time to time, Elsie, weeping and watching, moistened the poor girl's lips with a little melted ice.

Towards evening there seemed to be a change. Erminie moved and sighed, and then opened her eyes and breathed.

Elsie bent over her.

"Why—" began Erminie, and then she ceased. Elsie bent lower, and softly inquired:

"What is that you say, dear?"

"Why—am I—" again commenced Erminie, with an effort; but again her voice failed from weakness.

"Why are you here in bed, do you mean to ask, dear?" suggested Elsie.

Erminie nodded.

"You over-exerted yourself and had an attack of illness; but you are better now—much better, thank heaven," answered Elsie, cheerfully.

"How—bloodless—they—" panted Erminie, looking with surprise at her pale fingers, and speaking in the feeble and pointless way common with persons affected as she was, and breaking down before she finished her sentence.

"They were always very white, you know, dear, those fair fingers," said Elsie, encouragingly.

"No—rosy—rosy-tipped," murmured Erminie, who, when she had been well in mind and body, had been without the least vanity.

"So they will be again, dear. Never mind your fingers. Will you try to swallow a teaspoonful of this arrowroot?" coaxed Elsie.

Erminie, apparently only to please her nurse, nodded assent, and opened her mouth like a bird to receive the atom of nourishment. But the effort was too much for her weakness, and when she had swallowed it she gulped, shuddered, and shook her head in refusal of anything more.

After a little while she raised her eyes so wistfully to her nurse that Elsie bent over her to hear what she might have to say.

"How—long—have—" breathed Erminie, faintly, breaking off.

"How long have you been ill, do you mean, dear? Only since the day before yesterday," replied Elsie.

"What makes—so weak?" panted Erminie.

"Only your illness; but you are better now, and you will soon be strong again."

"You—think—so?"

"I know so, dearest. But you must not fatigue yourself by talking so much. Try to sleep."

And before Elsie had well spoken this advice, Erminie had dropped as suddenly into sleep as a stone falls into a well.

But this sleep was not quiet like the preceding one.

As evening approached the sleeper became restless: tossing her limbs about, rolling her head, and rolling her eyes, and muttering in approaching delirium.

Again desperate remedies were applied to meet violent symptoms. And again the phrensy was subdued to quietness; but the sufferer meanwhile brought nearly to dissolution. And her medical attendant might well have said, with the conqueror of old:

"Another such a victory and I am ruined."

By noon next day Erminie lay in sleep or stupor, with scarcely a sign of life in her aspect, with scarcely a hope of life in prospect.

Elsie was forced to leave her for a few hours, that she—Elsie—might recruit herself with a bath and a nap.

But early in the afternoon the faithful girl was again by the bedside of her friend.

To her surprise, she thought she saw symptoms of a favourable change.

Erminie was breathing softly. She opened her eyes, and seeing Elsie, tried to put out her hand.

Elsie took that pale hand and kissed it, and then stooped and kissed the still paler brow.

"Elsie!" breathed the sick girl.

"What is it, dearest?"

"Must I—die?"

"Nonsense, no, my dear; you are in no sort of danger."

Erminie smiled sadly and turned away her eyes. Presently her lips moved as if she would have spoken, and Elsie stopped to hear.

"I want—"

"What, dear Erminie?"

"My pastor—please."

"I will send for him, dear Erminie."

"Soon—now!" panted the sinking girl.
 "Yes, now, dearest, you shall have him," said Elsie, who beckoned to Catherine to take her place at the bedside, and then left the room to have the wish of her friend gratified.

Dr. Sales, the beloved and venerated pastor of the Rosenthal family, had since her father's death stood in a father's position towards Erminie.

With the deepest distress he had heard of that good girl's illness. He had called every day to see her or to ask after her.

He had not been permitted to make his presence known to her. But once or twice, while she lay in stupor, he had stood over her unconscious form, gazing anxiously down on her death-like face; or he had knelt beside her bed, praying silently for her recovery.

It was, therefore, without surprise that Elsie, when she went downstairs, found the pastor waiting in the hall.

"Oh, Dr. Sales, I am so glad to see you! I had just come down to send for you," she eagerly exclaimed.

"How is our dear child this morning?" anxiously inquired the pastor.

Elsie burst into tears.

"Worse?" breathlessly demanded the old man.

"Oh, how can I tell you? Heaven only knows! Her last paroxysm of fever and delirium was less violent; but then such powerful depletives have been used, and they have left her weak almost unto death. But she is conscious now, and has asked for you."

"Can you show me at once into her room?"

"Oh, yes, come," said Elsie, softly leading the way upstairs and into Erminie's chamber.

Catherine still sat beside the bed, fanning the sinking girl, who had again suddenly dropped into sleep or stupor—it was impossible to say which.

"You will not disturb her?" whispered Elsie, anxiously.

"Certainly not. I will sit here quietly until she awakens or returns to consciousness," replied the pastor, in a low tone.

At a sign from Elsie the girl Catherine arose and left the room. And the pastor seated himself in the vacated chair, and took the palm leaf and fanned Erminie, while he watched for her awakening.

The room was very cool, shady, and quiet, and so the sleeper lay calmly reposing for nearly an hour, and then she softly opened her eyes and looked with a gentle, bewildered gaze upon the figure of the preacher seated by her bed.

"Do you know me, my child?" whispered the pastor.

She feebly moved her hand and smiled.

"You sent for me, dear child," went on Dr. Sales.

She nodded, and then turned her eyes anxiously towards Elsie, who came and bent down to hear what Erminie should have to say.

"Something—to give me—" Erminie panted, and stopped.

"Strength, do you mean, my dear?" inquired Elsie.

Erminie nodded.

Elsie poured out some liquid from a vial into a spoon and put it to her lips.

Erminie swallowed with difficulty, but seemed to be revived by the dose.

"Now, dear, go—and leave me—with my pastor—please," she murmured.

And Elsie gave the purport of these words to the pastor, and then left the room.

Erminie turned her fading eyes upon the anxious face of her old friend.

He stooped over her to hear what she might wish to say.

"Dear friend, must I die?" she whispered.

"I pray not—I earnestly pray not, my child," answered the pastor, with ill-suppressed emotion.

"But you believe that I must?"

"No, no—"

"Don't try to deceive yourself or me, dear friend. You believe that I must die. All the others seem to know that I must. I see it in every face."

"My child, my child, the Lord of heaven and earth is also the Lord of life and death. He is able to save to the uttermost the body as well as the soul. Pray and believe and live," said the pastor, trying to control his agitation.

"I would rather submit myself to His will. I do not fear death. But—"

Erminie paused, her strength failed, her senses wandered for a moment, her eyes flamed over, and her chin dropped.

Was it a swoon? or was it death?

In great disturbance, Dr. Sales poured some Cologne water upon a fresh handkerchief, and bathed her head and face, and held it to her nose that she might inhale the reviving essence.

And in a few moments he had the comfort of seeing her draw a deep breath and open her eyes. She did

not know that she had fainted, for she took up the sentence just where she had left it off.

"For the sake of others, I ought to know my condition, so as to arrange my affairs."

"My child, you are fatiguing yourself too much. Let me entreat you to be quiet."

"No; I must speak—while I can. I feel I have no strength to make any but a verbal will. And Justin is not here. And so—you will listen to me."

"Speak on, then, dear child, but take your time—do not weary yourself."

And with many pauses and rests between her words, Erminie spoke.

"You know, dear friend, the large property left me by my uncles?"

"Yes."

"Well, if I die without a will, Justin, as my heir-at-law, will come into possession of the whole."

"Certainly."

"And I cannot make a will, but I know that I can trust my dear brother to execute my wishes as conscientiously as if they were expressed in the most legally drawn-up testament that ever was framed."

"Indeed you may, my dear," replied the pastor, as he once more bathed her face and head in the reviving Cologne water.

"Well, please tell Justin, then, my last dying wishes."

The doctor took out his note-book and pencil to assist his memory, if future need should be.

"I wish Justin to take one-third of the whole of my property for himself, to give a second third to Britomarte Conyers, whom I feel sure that he will eventually marry, and to give the remaining third—"

Dr. Sales wrote all this down in his note-book, and then looked up to see why Erminie did not continue. And he saw that she had again grown deadly faint.

"Oh, Father in heaven! she is hastening her own death by all this effort," cried the pastor, in deep distress, as he threw down his note-book, and caught up a bottle of Cologne water and freely bathed her face, head, and hands.

Again she rallied, smiled, and pointed to the note-book, mildly begging him to take it up and proceed with his work.

"My child, my child, you are too feeble for all this exertion. I must insist upon your resting for awhile," said Dr. Sales.

"Rest—long rest—will come very soon. But now—I must go on," persisted the sinking girl, pointing to the note-book.

Dr. Sales shook his head. Erminie turned on him an imploring look, and her eyes filled with tears.

"You cannot resist the prayer of the dying, and the most important part of my bequest is behind. The remaining third—"

Here, with a sigh, Dr. Sales took up his note-book.

"The remaining third of my property I wish Justin to devote to the relief of the aged and destitute."

The pastor wrote this down, and then looked up for farther instructions.

"That is all," said Erminie, simply.

Dr. Sales would willingly have inquired her reasons for making this bequest, but he refrained from taxing her strength with an explanation.

The excitement of her interview with Dr. Sales had been far too great for the strength of the sinking girl.

She recovered from her swoon of exhaustion, but it was only to pass into a state of nervous restlessness, that speedily progressed into feverish delirium and rose to raging phreny.

Another awful night with the sufferer tried all the endurance of her attendants.

It was late in the morning before the raving madness subsided, and the patient sank into a fatal coma.

The visit of the physician in the forenoon left not a hope in this world for her life.

The minister came and prayed by her bedside, but she heard him not.

She lay in a stupor that everyone felt must end in death.

"And her brother has not arrived!" exclaimed Elsie, wringing her hands.

"But she has left her last words for him with me," said Dr. Sales.

The physician went away, feeling certain that at his next visit he should see the crape badge upon the door that should warn him a bright young life had left the earth.

The minister remained in the room, watching with Elsie beside the death-bed, and praying God for strength for all to bear the approaching overwhelming bereavement.

The house was kept very quiet—unnecessarily so, since nothing on earth could now disturb the calm dreamer on the bed. But nevertheless it was kept so very quiet.

Straw was laid before the line of garden wall facing the road, to deaden even at that distance the sound of the passing vehicles.

The door-knocker was muffled and the wires of the bells were cut. Locks and hinges were oiled. And every man and woman in the place wore list slippers, and moved in silence and murmured in whispers.

Very, very still was the place. So that there was no warning of the approaching traveller, until the door of the sick-room softly opened and Catherine crept in and whispered to Elsie:

"Mr. Justin has come."

With the old familiar household servants Colonel Rosenthal was still Mr. Justin.

Elsie started up, and signing to Catherine to take her place, slipped out of the room and downstairs, and passed into the library, where she naturally expected to find Justin.

He was pacing silently up and down the floor. On her entrance he turned quickly and demanded, eagerly:

"How is she? how is she?"

"Oh, Justin!" exclaimed Elsie, dropping into a chair and bursting into tears.

"Dead? dead?" cried Justin, breathlessly, starting towards her and seizing her hand.

"Not yet! not yet! Oh, Justin!"

"But—dying?"

Elsie nodded her head and burst into heavier sobs. Justin threw himself into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and groaned in anguish.

And so they remained a few moments—Elsie sobbing heavily, Justin struggling for composure.

At length, Elsie arose, and with a still heaving bosom went to her companion and said:

"You had better see her now—while—while she—while she still lives!"

"Is she conscious?" groaned Justin.

Elsie shook her head.

"Oh, how—how did she take this fatal fever?" inquired Justin, as he arose to follow his conductor.

"How? Can you doubt? By her unremitted devotion in the hospitals. Oh, Justin, Justin! If ever yet a young saint won a crown of martyrdom, your sister will. She visited the fever-wards that everyone else except surgeons and nurses avoided. She ministered to scores of the fever-stricken, and comforted and saved many. But now you will see the end!"

As Elsie murmured these last words they reached the door of Erminie's chamber, which had been left standing open for the free ventilation of the room.

"Come in," said Elsie, leading the way.

Justin, with a depressed and reverent bearing, followed Elsie up to the bedside of his sister.

Dr. Sales and Catherine were in attendance, but both silently made way for the afflicted brother, who now stood gazing upon the wreck of his beautiful only sister.

There she lay, still, white, cold, and almost lifeless as marble.

Justin's great frame shook with the terrible storm of sorrow that he could not wholly repress.

For a few moments the venerable pastor held back in respect for the sacredness of the brother's grief. Then he went slowly to the side of Justin, took his hand, and said:

"You know how much I feel with you. My grief and sense of loss are scarcely less than your own. But we know also where to look for strength to endure."

Justin wrung the pastor's hand in silence, and then sank down in the chair that some friendly hand had placed for him.

Leaving the three tearful guardians by the bedside of the sinking girl, Elsie went down to have all manner of comforts and refreshments prepared for the newly arrived brother.

And then, when she had made everything ready, she returned to the chamber of Erminie, and whispered to Justin that his dressing-room was prepared, and that his luncheon would be put upon the table as soon as he should be ready to eat it.

More for the purpose of getting away to indulge his sorrow in solitude than for any other reason, Justin arose and left the chamber.

CHAPTER LXXII

Hushed were his angel's lips, but still their bland
 And beautiful expression seemed to melt
 With love that could not die. Campbell.

"You should lie down and try to get some rest, my poor child. You look quite worn out," whispered Dr. Sales, looking compassionately on Elsie's thin white face and tremulous frame.

"I will, when Justin returns to the room. I must sleep an hour or two this afternoon, so as to be able to watch with her through the night, if indeed she should live so long," assented Elsie.

And when Justin resumed his place by the bedside, Elsie retired to seek for her much needed sleep, warn-

ing them all to have her called if any change should take place in Erminie.

It was as well Elsie went away when she did, for if she had remained in the sick-room five minutes longer, no one would have been able to persuade her to go to rest.

For scarcely was the tired girl safe within her sanctuary, before old Frederica came hobbling upstairs, and put her head into the door of the sick-room.

Justin arose softly and went to her.

"What is it, Frederica?" he asked.

"I want Miss Elsie."

"She is gone to lie down. She must not be disturbed on any account. Can I supply her place?"

"Well, she asked for Miss Elsie, sir. But if Miss Elsie can't see her, I suppose you can."

"See—who?"

"Miss Conyers, sir."

"Miss Conyers!" exclaimed Justin.

And all the joy his sorrow could admit for companionship rushed into his heart. But then came wonder and perplexity, and he repeated slowly, "Miss Conyers?"

"Yes, Miss Conyers, and she's just off on a long journey, and she looks completely worn out."

"I will see her immediately," said Justin.

And he stole to the bedside, whispered the news of the arrival to Dr. Sales, and then he followed old Frederica from the room, and down the stairs.

He opened the library door. There stood Britomarte, sun-burned, dusty, travel-stained, almost unrecognizable, but undoubtedly Britomarte.

"Britomarte! Miss Conyers!" exclaimed Justin, going towards her with both hands stretched forth.

She met him and seized his hands as she exclaimed:

"How is your sister? How is my dear Erminie?"

"Oh, Britomarte! Oh, my friend, in what an hour of sorrow we meet!"

"She is—not gone?" hurriedly breathed Miss Conyers.

"No, not gone, but she is an angel prepared for heaven, and she is going," groaned Justin.

"Oh, what is it? What is it that is killing her?" wept Britomarte.

Justin told her, as Elsie had told him:

"A malignant fever, caught in the hospital during her attendance upon the sick."

"Elsie! where is she? How is she?"

"Well, except that she is very much fatigued with incessant watching. She is gone to lie down for a few hours."

"And when can I see my dear Erminie?"

"At any time. Nothing disturbs her now. Would to heaven it could. But I warn you, dear Britomarte, that the night will almost break your heart."

"Take me to her, please," said Miss Conyers, rising and taking off her dusty bonnet and shawl.

Justin led the way upstairs to the chamber of death, and Britomarte went up to the bedside and stood gazing upon the ruins of her beautiful friend as Justin had gazed before; and the watchers now made way for her as they had once made way for him; and after a few minutes, Britomarte sank, sobbing, upon her knees, and buried her head in the bedclothes.

They let her weep on undisturbed until the storm of grief had exhausted its violence and left her quiet, and then Justin and Dr. Sales approached, and each took a hand of hers, and they raised her from the floor and placed her on a chair.

"Your grief is one that is shared by us all. All who know and loved her will be awfully bereaved. Only heaven can comfort us," said the pastor, gravely, as he pressed the hand of Miss Conyers.

At that moment old Frederica again appeared at the door, ushering in the medical attendant.

The physician in solemn silence shook hands with Dr. Sales, Justin, and Britomarte, and then proceeded to examine his patient.

He lingered some fifteen or twenty minutes at the bedside with his finger on her pulse, his eyes on her countenance, or his ear near her lips—counting, watching, or listening for the ebb, or flow, or pause of the currents of life.

At length he made his report: no change in the patient for better or worse. He gave his prescriptions—certain draughts and powders, to be administered under certain contingencies; and he issued his orders to be summoned immediately should any change take place in her, and then he took leave and went away.

The afternoon passed off and no change took place in Erminie. She lay on her bed, like a dead girl on her bier, or like a stone effigy on a tomb, and her watchers sat around her motionless as statues.

As for Elsie, shut away in her distant room, she slept the deep sleep of weariness until after sunset, when she awoke with a start, feeling guilty that she

had slept so long. Before even hurrying on her clothes, she threw a large shawl around her and slipped down the back stairs to inquire of Frederica about Erminie.

"She is still the same—no better, but no worse," replied the housekeeper. "And now, Miss Elsie, you had better go back to your room and take a 'refreshing bath; and by the time you are dressed I will bring you a cup of tea and a round of toast," added old Frederica, wisely suppressing the fact of Miss Conyers's arrival, lest Elsie in her impatience to meet her friend, should deprive herself of the comfort and refreshment so much needed.

So Elsie, ignorant of Britomarte's presence in the house, took her bath and afterwards her tea, and feeling refreshed and strengthened, went immediately to the sick-room, and walked directly to the bed where Erminie still lay, a beautiful, white, motionless form, and where the watchers still sat like statues.

In the absorption of all her thoughts with the subject of the sick girl, Elsie had not noticed that there was a stranger present. She looked down upon the marble face, pressed her lips to the cold mouth and the colder brow, laid her hand upon the faintly beating heart, dropped fast tears upon the quiescent form, and murmured:

"No change! no change! Oh, heaven, will she pass away in this manner, without recognizing any of her friends? What does the doctor say, Justin?"

"He can give no decided opinion," sighed the brother. Then, seeing that Elsie's attention continued to be so fixed upon the patient that she entirely overlooked the visitor, he added:

"Elsie, do you see Miss Conyers?"

And Britomarte arose and held out her hand.

Elsie gave a start and uttered a cry that must have aroused any patient not in a state of coma.

"You—you here! Where did you drop from? When did you come? Oh! but I am so glad to see you; or I should be so, if I could feel glad of anything now," eagerly yet cautiously exclaimed Elsie, in a half-suppressed excitement and a half-smothered voice.

"I came last from ———. I got here at two o'clock this afternoon," whispered Miss Conyers.

"At two o'clock! That was just when I lay down. Why didn't they call me?"

"We would not permit you to be disturbed," said Britomarte.

"My dear Elsie," said Justin, "Miss Conyers has arrived off a long and dusty journey, and needs hospitable attentions of all sorts. May I ask you to take my dear sister's place as hostess, and do the honours of the house to her?"

"Of course, of course," hurriedly whispered Elsie; and she beckoned Britomarte, who followed her from the room.

First Elsie gave orders to old Frederica to prepare a light repast for the guest. And then she led Britomarte to a chamber upstairs, where she supplied her with water, towels, and a complete change of clothes.

And afterwards, while Miss Conyers sat drinking tea, she poured into her ear the history of her strange meeting with Goldsborough, in the hospital, and his tragic end.

Much of this Britomarte had heard before, by letters from Erminie; but now she heard for the first time the full particulars of the affair.

Elsie then talked of Erminie and her fatal devotion to the sufferers in the fever-wards of the hospital, and the martyrdom in which that devotion was about to end. And at that point she burst into tears.

"Take comfort," said Miss Conyers. "I have watched her attentively for the last five or six hours. And friends and physicians may all be mistaken at last; and youth and constitution may eventually triumph."

"Well, I hope so; or rather I would hope if I could," sighed Elsie, despondently.

And then they talked of other things.

Elsie had her own theory, true or false, of Britomarte's hidden life; and so she forbore to ask Miss Conyers any questions about her manner of existence.

And indeed in a little while they returned to the sick-room, where the beautiful Erminie still lay on her bed like a dead girl on her bier.

The gentlemen went downstairs to their late and comfortless dinner; for meals were now very irregular in this house of woe.

After dinner Dr. Sales went away.

And that evening the watch for the night was arranged in this manner:

Elsie, having been refreshed by her long afternoon's nap, was to sit up from eight o'clock until two, and then she was to be relieved by Britomarte.

Miss Conyers, being fatigued by her long journey, was to go to bed at eight o'clock, and rest until two, when she was to rise and relieve Elsie.

Accordingly at eight o'clock Britomarte retired; and Elsie, having drunk several large cups of strong green

tea, to keep herself wide awake, took her seat in the big easy-chair near the head of Erminie's bed.

She had nothing to do but to think. She could neither read nor sew; for there was no light in the room but the dim taper that burnt upon the hearth. The whole house was very silent. The three gentlemen, Justin, Major Fielding, and Captain Ethel, were reading, or trying to read, in the library below.

The two women servants, old Frederica and Catharine, her niece, were seated in their kitchen.

And the one man servant, old Bob, was dozing in a sort of porter's chair in the hall near the front door, to be easily within call.

Elsie looked forward wearily, drearily to her six hours of lonely vigilance. Nothing but her love for Erminie could have borne through its solitude and tediousness.

Even the first two hours, between eight and ten, when she had waking company in the house, seemed awful in solitude and interminable in tediousness.

All was so silent that she heard the sound of the very first footfalls of the family preparing to retire, and it filled her with a strange, nervous sense of desolation and dread.

First came the echo of the distant steps of the women servants going up the back stairs to their rooms in the attic.

Next came the three gentlemen up the front stairs. They all paused at the door of the sick-room, to hear the last report of Erminie's condition before taking a final leave for the night.

Elsie went to meet them and gave the cheerless bulletin—

"No change."

Justin came in on tip-toe and gazed mournfully on his sister for a few moments, and then kissed her pallid brow and stole away.

And the three gentlemen went up another flight of stairs, separated to their several apartments and retired to bed.

After that all about the house was as still as the tomb.

Every five or ten minutes Elsie stooped over her patient; but the still white face, so like the face of the dead, filled her with terror.

She could sometimes scarcely forbear screaming and running from the room. But she controlled herself and watched on.

"What has come over me?" she asked of herself.

"I am naturally no coward; and yet here I am listening, and watching, and starting, as if I expected to hear, or see, or suffer something hideous. Is it that I am out of sorts through broken rest and irregular meals—fatigue of body and anxiety of mind? Or is it the effect of the green tea? Or is it the proximity of death that gives all my surroundings a supernatural aspect and throws over my spirit an atmosphere of awe and dread? I will walk awhile."

And so saying, Elsie arose and paced up and down the floor. Her feet, cased in velvet slippers, and walking over a soft carpet, made no noise.

So Elsie paced back and forth many times, until she had walked a mile or two, if the distance had all been stretched out in a line.

Then when she had thoroughly fatigued herself, she sat down again in her easy-chair.

Her act had been a very imprudent one; it had tired her and made her sleepy.

Indeed, she was just dropping off to sleep, when the striking of the clock aroused her.

It was a very soft, silvery sounding clock; but it was enough to startle an irritable napper; and Elsie awoke with a spring, thinking that she had very nearly fallen asleep; but having no idea that she really had done so.

The clock chimed twelve.

And Elsie, to occupy her mind and keep herself awake, commenced quoting poetry; another imprudent act, for however appropriate were the lines to the time and scene, they were ill-chosen for the occasion, because they made her nervous, though not the less sleepy.

The lines she quoted were these:

"'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion on to the world."

And so on to the end.

Before Elsie got to the end she had dropped asleep again, and she slept on until she was once more aroused by the silvery striking of the clock.

It chimed "one," and she sprang up with a guilty pang.

"Goodness! I had nearly been asleep again. One o'clock! well, the time does pass. Only one hour more of this dreadful watch. I must try to keep awake somehow. It will never do to let Britomarte catch me, a sentinel, sleeping on my post. She is used to military discipline, and might take it into her head that I ought to be shot. And indeed I think she would be right. What a brute I am, even to feel like

going to sleep beside this dying angel!" exclaimed Elsie, rising and looking over her charge.

"No change—oh, no change, my poor, sweet martyr," she said, as she kissed the pale brow and then resumed her seat.

"Yes, I must keep awake somehow. Let me try more poetry, though nothing but the horrible recurs to my memory to-night," said Elsie, yawning.

Now o'er the one-half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft—

Elsie lost herself, nodded forward, caught herself up and began again, "Now witchcraft," and nodded, and then resumed, "Witchcraft," and then she fell fast asleep.

Now what followed Elsie could never exactly account for—could never even understand whether it were reality, dream, or "witchcraft" indeed.

But this was what took place, or seemed to do so.

Elsie thought that she was again on the point of dropping to sleep, when she became conscious that a tall, handsome, black-haired and black-dressed man stood beside her. She seemed only half awake, and took the man for Justin, and was about to speak to him, when she suddenly recognized General Eastworth.

Before Elsie recovered from her astonishment so as to be able to call out, the man, or the ghost, whichever it was, stretched forth his arm, and placed a moist sponge, enveloped in a white handkerchief, to her nose. And Elsie was at once exhilarated and overwhelmed by a strange, delicious odour, that intoxicated her with a wild yet sweet delirium, and deprived her of both the will and the power to change her position.

Sitting there, perfectly powerless, yet perfectly conscious, unable to move or to speak, she yet heard and saw all that passed.

The tall man plumed the sponge in the handkerchief to her bodice directly under her nose, so that, with her head resting on her breast, she must continue to breathe the fumes.

Then he turned and dropped on his knees by the bed so as to bring his dark, agonized brow nearer to the level of the beautiful pale face pillowed there, and he kissed the cold lips passionately and wept.

"Oh! my dearest, my dearest, it is even so I am here, at the risk of my life, of my honour, only to look upon your sweet eyes once more before they are hidden for ever in the grave, only to hear your gentle voice speak forgiveness before it is hushed for ever in death! But your eyes are closed—your lips are mute—and your wings are already spread for heaven! Oh, Erminie! Erminie! how could I ever have weighed my mad ambition against your holy love! Oh, my darling! my darling! that I could offer up my life in ransom for yours! I would give my life to restore you, my love!—nay, I would give my life merely to hear those sweet silent lips speak one word—forgiveness!"

And here the strong man bowed his head upon the side of the bed and wept convulsively.

And now came the strangest part of the strange vision.

Elsie, witnessing all that occurred, as in a nightmare dream from which she sought in vain to wake, saw also this strange phenomenon.

The white-robed form of Erminie slowly arose to a sitting posture; the golden glory of her auburn hair fell around her like a halo; her face shone as the face of an angel; she stretched forth her fair arms and let her fair hands fall softly and slowly as snowflakes upon the bowed black head beneath them; and she murmured, in a grave, sweet, silvery cadence:

"Tis not for me to say the heavenly word. But you sought me and I love you. You saved my dear father from a dreadful doom, and I bless you. May the Lord speak forgiveness to your soul, my love."

Yes, to Elsie's incredulous amazement, she who for twenty-four hours had lain on her bed "like a marble girl on a marble slab," incapable of being moved to consciousness by the gentle words and caresses of her only brother, or by the tender tear and kisses of her bosom friend, had been stirred to life and aroused to response by the passionate appeal of her ghostly lover!

Simultaneously with this strange discovery, there was a ringing as of many bells in Elsie's ears, a dancing as of many lights in Elsie's eyes, and the whole vision was whirled away from her in a delirious carnival of glory.

(To be continued.)

The great Champagne grower, Madame Cliquot (veuve), whose death has recently occurred, is much deplored on account of the extreme liberality of her character. The following authentic anecdote is related of this excellent lady:—Three years ago her son-in-law, the Count de Chevaligné, lost in the Rue

des Croix des Petits Champs a portfolio, containing forty bank-notes of 1,000 f. (£40) each. The count, on discovering his loss, gave notice to the police, remarking at the same time that he had no hopes of recovering it—adding, however, "I start for Rheims this evening; my name and address are inscribed on the pocket-book; therefore if it should be found you can forward it to me." That evening, as M. de Chevaligné was about to take his ticket at the railway-station, a poor workman came up to him and asked him if he had lost anything. "Of course," answered the Count, "in the Rue Croix des Petits Champs I dropped my pocket-book, with forty notes of 1,000 f. each in it." "I am happy, sir, to return it to you; pray open the portfolio and reckon the money." M. de Chevaligné expressed his gratitude by a polite bow, took his ticket, and started for Rheims. When at dinner he entertained his mother-in-law with the anecdote. "What reward did you give the poor man?" inquired Madame Cliquot. "None," replied this representative of the aristocracy; "it never struck me." "Well, then, the best thing you can do," replied his mother-in-law, "is to return by the next train to Paris, find out the poor man's address—which you will easily do at the police-office—and share with him the 40,000 f. he restored to you, adding 10,000 f. on my account." The poor workman has ever since been enjoying an income of £70 per annum, the interest of the sum he owes to his honesty.

THE REPENTANT COQUETTE.

ESTHER and MARION MONTEITH were cousins, but they differed from each other in every respect. Esther was a tall, beautiful girl of nineteen, with splendid dark eyes, glossy raven hair, and her features were faultlessly regular. She was always attired in some plain, becoming dress, which fitted her superb form exactly. She was an orphan, her parents having died when she was a child, and since then she had resided with her aunt Eunice, Marion's mother, who was a widow.

Esther was an humble and sincere Christian, always doing a deed of charity when it lay within her power, and her plainness of dress annoyed her aunt exceedingly, as she was a proud, wealthy, and fashionable woman.

Marion Monteith was a vain, haughty girl of seventeen, with pale blue, expressionless eyes, light flaxen hair, and a pale, sallow complexion; but with the aid of rouge and magnificent dresses, she was passably pretty. She was an heiress and a belle, and of course she had numerous admirers and plenty of suitors, but she was a heartless coquette, and many were the hearts she had succeeded in winning, only to be thrown carelessly aside after they were won.

Esther often sighed as she thought of her cousin's frivolity and utter selfishness, and many times she talked with her of the course she was pursuing, but Esther possessed little influence over the wayward and heartless girl, and Marion did pretty much as she chose.

"Is Miss Monteith at home this evening?" asked a tall, handsome gentleman, as he stood upon the stone steps of Mrs. Monteith's elegant mansion, of the footman who had answered the ring of the bell.

"She is, sir. Please walk in," said the servant, respectfully, and he conducted the visitor into a large, spacious drawing-room, and then left him to apprise Miss Monteith of his call.

A few moments afterwards Marion appeared, and, with a winning smile and graceful manner, she said: "Good evening, Mr. Carr."

A shade of disappointment swept across the gentleman's fine features as he returned the salutation, and Marion averted her face for a moment to conceal from him the scornful smile that wreathed her ruby lips, for she had guessed aright the meaning of his look.

An embarrassing silence ensued, which was at length broken by Mr. Carr, who asked, in a rich, well-modulated voice:

"Is your cousin at home, Miss Monteith?"

"She is, Mr. Carr. I will go and try to persuade her to come down, but I doubt much if she will," replied Marion, and she left the drawing-room; but instead of her going to her cousin's room, she went to her own, and clasping her jewelled hands together, she muttered:

"I will win him. He is the only man I care for, and yet he loves Esther; but she shall not stand long in my way. I can and will estrange them, and then, by persevering, I will bring him to my feet."

The scheming belle soon returned to the drawing-room, and, with a mocking look of commiseration, she said:

"Esther is engaged this evening, Mr. Carr, and hopes you will excuse her."

Again a shade of vexation crossed the visitor's features, and he thought:

"She does not wish to see me, and hopes I will excuse her. I will not call again."

During the evening Marion was so agreeable and charming that he wavered in his resolution about calling again.

She played exquisitely upon the piano, and sang very well, and exerted herself every way to please him, and she accomplished her purpose.

When he departed, she begged him so earnestly to call again that he could not refuse, and he left her with the promise of calling again during the course of the week.

"The game has commenced, and I must play it through," thought Marion, as the door closed behind her lover's form.

"He proposed last night, cousin."

"Who?" asked Esther, languidly lifting her eyes to her cousin's face.

"Mr. Carr, to be sure," replied Marion, and she watched Esther's countenance narrowly as she spoke.

The rich colour forsook her cousin's cheek when she heard the name; her eyes became dull and heavy and the book she had been reading fell from her powerless grasp; but controlling herself, with a strong effort, she said:

"Did you accept his offer, Marion?"

"I did, cousin."

"Do you love him truly and fondly?"

"What a curious question, Esther," laughed Marion. "Of course—I shouldn't have accepted him if I didn't like him."

"Like is not the word, Marion," said Esther, looking steadily into her cousin's face.

"Well, then, I shouldn't have accepted him if I did not love him," returned Marion, averting her face.

"When are you going to be married?"

"Next spring."

"Be a good wife to him, Marion."

"I intend to," was the curt reply.

For a short time after this neither spoke. Esther sat as motionless as a statue of stone, the wild throbbings of her heart almost audible, and her lovely face as pale as marble. Marion stood near, unconscious of the agony her cousin was suffering. At length Marion said, maliciously:

"You seem to take a good deal of interest in my future husband, cousin."

A warm colour suffused Esther's face as her cousin made this remark, and she replied:

"It is because he is my cousin's betrothed husband."

"Well, I shall expect you to be bridesmaid."

"I cannot, Marion."

"Cannot, cousin. Why?"

"Do not ask me, Marion," replied Esther, in a really distressed tone.

"Well, I must leave you, cousin, as I am expecting company," said Marion, and she left the room, much to Esther's relief.

"I am not going to marry him. I have broken the engagement, and given him back his ring!" exclaimed Marion, one bright spring morning, coming into the room where Esther was seated engaged upon a piece of embroidery work.

"Not going to marry him, Marion?" repeated Esther, in surprise. "To-morrow is the day appointed for the marriage, and all the guests are invited. Surely, you cannot mean what you say?"

"I mean that I am not going to marry Mr. Carr."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not love him."

"You told me you did once, Marion."

"Then I thought I loved him; but I have found out since that I love Mr. Percival better than I do him, so I have broken the engagement," said Marion, earnestly.

"Ah, cousin, you do not know what a priceless boon you throw from you when you throw away Mr. Carr's love," said Esther, with a sigh.

"Should I marry a man whom I do not love?" asked Marion.

"No, I don't know as you should," returned Esther. "Did he release you willingly?" she continued, eagerly.

"Yes, quite willingly," replied Marion.

"He is a good man," said Esther, musingly.

"I know it; but I had a great deal rather have him the husband of my beloved cousin Esther than of myself, and I told him so," laughed Marion, mischievously. "Marion, stop!" commanded her cousin, but she might as well have spoken to the wind.

The girl recklessly went on:

"He was very much astonished at my words; but I told him I was certain you loved him, and I know you do, cousin, for you always tremble when you meet him. And he loves you, Esther, for he told me so, but he said you shunned his society. Now—"

"I never shunned him until he came to you in the capacity of a lover," interrupted Esther.

"Listen to me, cousin, and I will explain. One night Mr. Carr came here to see you. I thought I loved him then, and so I went down to meet him, and when he inquired for you, I told him you were engaged, and wished to be excused. Oh, dear cousin, forgive me for estranging you and Mr. Carr! You are the only one who is worthy of his love. I have sinned, Esther, but I am repentant now. Forgive me for having caused you so much suffering—so many hours of misery and anguish!"

"I do, Marion; I gladly forgive you."

"And you shall be happy once more, dear cousin, for I have confessed my guilt to Mr. Carr, and he now awaits you in the drawing-room."

That night Esther Montie's pillow was wet with tears, but they were not tears of woe or agony. Oh, no, they were happy, blissful tears.

When the trees had put forth their leaves again, and the fields had become green and bright once more, she gave her hand and heart to Mr. Carr, and upon the same day Marion was united to Mr. Percival.

Marion is no longer a proud, fashionable belle, but a happy wife and mother, while the beautiful Esther remains unchanged, perfectly contented with her lot.

E. L. F.

THE AUSTRIAN ARMY.

The discipline of the army is strict to a degree, but it rules too much by the stick to make good soldiers. At Vienna I had for a servant a retired soldier, and he gave me an account of all he had undergone, which made me cease to wonder that the Austrians are unsuccessful in war. The common soldiers were then starved and constantly beaten; their pay, when all deductions were made, did not amount to a half-penny a day; and they were shockingly underfed at the same time. They got no breakfast, a loaf of black bread being served out twice or three times a week, which they exchanged for tobacco; so that they often went without food until dinner-time, unless they got some from house to house out of charity. Hence, on a short march before dinner, half of the men fall out of the ranks from pure exhaustion; and they are so beaten for the slightest fault that all the spirit is cudgelled out of them.

Strange as it may appear, the old brutal flogging which existed in our service is not half so injurious as this constant use of the stick. The one may injure the moral nature of the man; but the other thoroughly crows the spirit of the soldier. The man who has been brutally flogged may lead a forlorn life, and fight with the spirit of a hero; but the man who has been constantly beaten like a cur, will assuredly, in the day of battle, behave like one also. A young English friend of mine, who was cadet in a cavalry regiment, once told me, laughing, that he had been put in irons for having a wrong turn on his carb-chain, and the commanding officer who did this was a very good fellow, and liked him. A common soldier was then liable to be beaten with the stick, and, I think, get twenty lashes without court-martial. Things may have changed since I was there, and since the Italian war; but Solferino and Magenta were the fruits of what then existed.

The officers always struck me as a hardworking set of men, but more like clerks in a military establishment than military men, in our sense of the word. They were constantly in barracks, and neither rode, shot, fished, nor indulged in any field sport. Smoking and flirting seemed the sum of their amusements. I never knew one take a good walk in the country; and all matters connected with field sports were a riddle to them. Shooting a bird on the wing, fishing with artificial flies, sport of any kind except for the pot, were regarded by them as eccentricities of the most curious nature. I once amused them infinitely by telling them that we kept terriers to kill rats; the idea of keeping a dog for any purpose but to eat bones seemed to them the most ludicrous thing imaginable. A German's idea of shooting is to steal cautiously through the snow, and get a pot-shot at half-a-dozen frozen birds, which he brings home in triumph. His idea of fishing is netting plothoric carp in a small pond. Some artificial flies I showed them astonished them more than anything else, and they could not imagine why people should fish with them who could not the river.

Each officer seemed to me to have every day as much duty as an orderly officer has in the English service. They generally remained in barracks until dinner-time, to which they came looking jaded, and yawning fearfully; after dinner they smoked, and again, I think, went into barracks. They lounged about a little in the evening, but until that time never seemed quite free from duty. They pay a respect to their superior officers which is scarcely conceivable, and borders on the servile. When the major came down to inspect them, they reminded me of a set of schoolboys; would scarcely sit down in his presence; spoke in whispers, and paid more respect than our officers would give to the commander-in-chief.

As far as uniform and accoutrements go, they are most soldierlike and efficient. An officer's white cloth tunic can be procured for about twenty-five shillings, and, in spite of its colour, is a most durable article, and by the aid of pipeclay can be worn until it is threadbare. There is no difference between full and ordinary dress, except that they wear a newer coat, a broad scarf of yellow silk round the waist, and a shako instead of a cap. The sword is large and serviceable, slung from a leather belt, and in a steel scabbard. Three suits of uniform and a large cloak complete their cheap and serviceable attire. The only fault in it is the colour, as it shows blood, and is easily seen by an enemy, so that they have sometimes, even in hot weather, to march in their long grey cloaks to escape observation. With this exception, the entire uniform is excellent, and as they have no such thing as muffs, an officer's baggage is very small, and costs the owner very little."—*The English Captain in Silesia.*

FACETIÆ.

EVIDENT.—With what material ought the Needle Rifle to be loaded? Gun-cotton, of course.—*Punch.*

How can you take away one from nineteen and have twenty remain? XIX—take away I, it leaves XX.

DEAR MISS CHIBBLES says, even if a woman had as many locks upon her heart as she had upon her head, a cunning knave would find his way to it.

It has been said that any lawyer who writes so clearly as to be intelligible, is an enemy to his profession.

If you would be known and not know, vegetate in a village; if you would know and not be known, live in a city.

CAPTAINS are Robinson Crusoe in their reckonings, keeping the accounts of the voyage recorded on logs. On the return trip a back-log is used.

A FRENCH paper recently asserted that a parliamentary train was the one which conveyed English Members of Parliament up to town and back again at night.

IRONY.

"Can you do all sorts of casting here?" said a solemn-looking chap at the Iron Works the other day.

"Yes," said Frank, preparing to take his order; "all sorts."

"Well, then," returned the solemn inquirer, "I would like to have you cast a shadow."

He was cast out.

An Irish lad complained, the other day, of the harsh treatment he received from his father. "He treats me," said he, mournfully, "as if I was his son by another father and mother."

THE *New York Herald's* London correspondent paid £1,000 for sending off to his paper, per Atlantic cable, the King of Prussia's speech. We had no idea it was worth as much.

A FASHIONABLE countess asked a young nobleman which he thought the prettiest flowers, roses or tulips; he replied, with great gallantry, "Your ladyship's two hips before all the roses in the world."

A TRUMPETING fellow, bragging of the wounds he had received in his face and in battle, a companion knowing him to be a coward, told him he had best take heed the next time he ran away how he looked back.

SPURGEON says, "Teaching men morals is as though I had a clock that would not go, and I turned round one of the cog-wheels; but faith takes the key and winds up the mainspring, and the whole thing runs on readily."

SHIPS have a great number of hands and knees; the masts all have feet and steps; the bows have figures and cat-heads; the ship itself has a fore foot, but no hind one; and dead eyes, so-called because the "see" cannot come through them.

TOM LAVERY AND HIS WIFE'S QUARREL ABOUT THE CHEST OF DRAWERS.—"Oh, tell us that story, granny darling!" exclaimed little Tim Deveren, still holding his grandmother's hand; "I want a story so bad." "Well, Tim, here it is," said the old woman: "The chest of drawers will stand beautifully under the window," said Tom Lavery. "Under the window," repeated his wife—as pretty a little woman as you'd see in a day's walk, but with a cruel tongue that would give nineteen to the dozen any day, and not think it a trouble—under the window," she said again, with a scornful curl on her lip; "it shall never go under the window while I have breath in my body. No, it shall stand forewent the window, where it will be seen and admired; under the window, indeed! I wonder you don't say up the chimney!" "It shall go under the window, Moyna Lavery; it's too say going I have been with you, intirely. You

are never satisfied, full or fasting, and think all the world should cursey to you; it shall go under the window, and you'd better not dare hinder it!" "It never shall," said Moyna; "I'll pitch the window into the street first!" "And I'd pitch you after it for company," said Tom. On this, Moyna raised a "wirristhrue" that you'd hear from this to Bantry, and Tom's loud voice had more noise than sense in it, —and Tom took the stick to his wife, —and she screamed murder, and at the lucky minute the door opened, and there, sure enough, stood Father Barry, and, as became a holy man, he asked them what they were at and what they were after, and as Moyna had the nimblest tongue, she said "her husband was that Omahawn that he would have the chest of drawers under the window, which she would never give in to, never! she'd lay her bones in the churchyard first!" "But where's the chest of drawers?" said Father Barry —and maybe the fool's look didn't come over both their faces. "The chest of drawers!" said one; "is it the chest of drawers?" said the other. "Oh, sorra a chest of drawers we have at all—yet!" So I was just thinking it's a good way to get our rights before we take on about them."

GREAT gaps have been opened in the palings about Primrose Hill to admit the Reformers, if they are willing to discuss matters in the open air. But they decline the offer: Hyde Park is their notion. They love the aristocratic air, or to be a nuisance. They will not even accept the cattle-market.

An astronomer, gazing at the moon, fell into a pond. "Had you looked into the water," said a countryman to him, "you might have seen the moon, but gazing upon the moon you could never have seen the pond."

JUVENILE PERCEPTION.

A schoolmistress once asked a pupil to tell—

What word the letters S double E spell.

The child was dull, and so the mistress cries:

"What is it, you dunce, I do with my eyes?"

"Oh, yes!" says the child, quickly taking the hint. "I know the word now, ma'am: S double E, squint!"

AN exchange says that "the two wings of the Fenian organization are about to unite." That is, the leaders, officers, &c., of the O'Mahony and Roberts sort. Then, we suppose, the "two wings" will fly away with the funds, and leave "the tail" to the poor crowd of contributors to wriggle.

A SEVERE ANSWER.—A dandy, strutting about a tavern, took up a pair of green spectacles which lay on the table, put them on his nose, and turning to the looking-glass, said, "Landlord, how do these become me? Don't you think they improve my looks?" "I think they do," replied the landlord; "they hide a part of your face."

BITING.

"Father," said a cobbler's boy, as he was pegging away at an old shoe, "they say, the trout bite now."

"Well, well," replied the old gentleman, "you stick to your work, and they won't bite you."

KEEP TO THE RIGHT.—"Turn out! turn out!" cried a roystering teamster to some one he was meeting. "Turn out, or I'll serve you as I did the other man." The stranger in astonishment complied, but when John was nearly opposite, called to him, with, "Pray, sir, how did you serve the other man?" "Why, sir," said the whip, tipping a wink, "I told him to turn out, and he wouldn't, so I turned out myself!"

A FRENCH paper gravely tells its readers that "Lord P." went to the office of the Atlantic Telegraph, and demanded to send a message. Refused at first, he urged his point, and by a payment of two hundred guineas, *argent comptant*, succeeded. He was furnished with paper and ink, and wrote, "Send me the strongest spark you can. Lord P." Waiting a moment while the message was sent, he took out a cigar and held it to the end of the wire. The spark came, the cigar was lighted, and "Lord P." went out smoking. This is not told as a joke, but is given amongst the news.

THE QUAKER AND HIS HAT.—A little scene occurred at the opening of the court of adjourned quarter sessions at Knutsford, recently, in consequence of a Quaker, who had been summoned on the grand jury, objecting to take off his hat. The Chairman (Mr. Townshend) asked who the juror was. The name was given, "Mr. Joseph Kitching, sharebroker, Rainow." The Chairman: "What are you? The Juror: I am a member of the Society of Friends. The Clerk: I suppose you have conscientious objections to take off your hat. The Juror: I have; I don't think it right to render to man the same homage we render to God. The Chairman: But Quakers take off their hats; if you have conscientious objections to take off your hat in a court of justice, we must get some one to take it off for you. The Juror: May I state my reasons? The Chairman: We want no

reasons; if you don't take off your hat it must be taken off for you. Hewitt (the crier), take his hat off. The crier of the court then gently removed Mr. Kitching's hat, and gave it him in his hand. The Chairman: There now, I'm sure you'll feel all the more comfortable. (Laughter.) The business of the court was then proceeded with.

AN UNPLEASANT REMINDER.—If the tiresome street-children beg any of the Members of the late Government to "Remember the Grotto," how painfully their words must force them to Remember the Cave!—*Punch*.

RAILWAY ARRANGEMENT.—We should be happy to be enabled to announce that all the railway companies, considering the danger of extortion to which male passengers travelling singly are exposed, have determined on running distinct carriages for unattended females, who will not be permitted to enter any other.—*Punch*.

OUR WOODEN WALLS.—Can anybody tell us of what use are all the obsolete old wooden yellow hulks which lie rotting at Sheerness and our other naval dockyards? They are clearly not kept floating for any warlike purpose, for in these days of rams and ironclads they are both harmless and defenceless. The *Miantonomoh* could sink them with a couple of shots apiece, and then steam away unharmed by all the broadsides they could blaze at her. What it yearly costs to paint them, and keep them at their moorings, is more than we can guess; but it is clearly a waste of money to let all this *inutile lignum* lie rotting in our harbours, when it might be sold for firewood, and so return a few pounds of the thousands it has cost. Will somebody in Parliament just ask why our old hulks are kept afloat when useless for any warlike end? We have no doubt a good answer to this question can be given: but we know that, *ex quo vis ligno non fit Mercurius*, and wooden heads are sometimes connected with the management of England's wooden walls.—*Punch*.

FRUIT TREE MANAGEMENT IN THE OLDEN TIME.

The following recommendation, from "The Art of Pruning Fruit Trees, by a Physician of Rochelle, translated in 1685," is deserving of more attention at the hands of modern cultivators than it generally receives:—

"Though I resolved to speak here but of lopping trees, nevertheless it may be allowed me to say somewhat curious concerning their watering, which contributes much to the abundance and greatness of their fruit. It will be proper in the evening at sunset, during the great heats of the summer, to sprinkle with water sometimes the branches and the fruit of trees with a Dutch pump; the tree will be greener, and the fruit better supplied with nourishment. It is far better to do so than to water them at the root; for the last watering renders pears unsavoury, and of an ill-taste, whereas the first, answering to an evening rain, or the dew of the night, keeps the tree supplied with nourishment, which afterwards gives it fruit the juice, which is meat for them, for rendering them good and delicious. For this, we ought to observe that the water which we will make use of ought to be drawn in the morning, and to have been a little exposed to the sun, so that it should not be cold in the evening when we would use it. Moreover, that the pump has three or four little holes, that it may make the water which issues from it to divide itself into a thousand little drops; finally, that we ought to place ourselves at 15 feet from the tree which we will water."

The Dutch pump here alluded to seems to be the same cheap and effective wooden syringe still so much in use by the tidy Dutch women in washing the outside of their windows and house walls, and which pedestrians have to look out for if they are careful to avoid a drenching in passing along the streets of Dutch towns. It might be advantageous to our implement dealers to import supplies of these useful and inexpensive syringes for the owners of small gardens.

A MIGHTY statistician, Dr. Jolly, has just declared war against alcohol. Last year he waged a fierce combat against tobacco, but now he attacks drinkers. He does not use measured terms in his denunciation against those who use spirituous liquors, as you will remark by the following extract from the report he has just sent up to the Academy of Medicine:—"In every country the statistics of the amount of alcohol imbibed precisely correspond with the number of judicial sentences recorded in law reports of the year, as well as with the number of poor, of beggars, of vagabonds, of divorced husbands and wives, of idiot rickety children, of suicides, murders, and of epileptics and lunatics inscribed on State registers." Whether this be correct or not, we are not prepared to say, but it is a positive fact that the consumption of spirituous liquors in France is making rapid progress.

In 1788 the amount of alcohol sold did not exceed 280,000 hectolitres, during the course of the year. In 1840 1,000,000, and in 1863 3,000,000 hectolitres were consumed (an hectolitre is twenty-two gallons). In 1840 eight litres of brandy was drunk per inhabitant within the barriers of this city; thirty litres is now the average consumption per head. According to Dr. Jolly, 300,000 Parisians daily indulge in their *petit verre* (a litre is equivalent to an English pint and three quarters).

The French representatives abroad have been told to inform the various governments that they are to be sure not to forget the 1st April, not with the view we attach to it in England, but that it will be the day upon which the Paris Exhibition will open. The feeling is that time is out of joint for civilization, and war is on the card. Few countries, few merchants, and manufacturers, and inventors would like to intrust their precious wares to a country which tomorrow may be at war, and though no one can expect it from honourable France, those wares might tempt, like the gold of Frankfurt has tempted the weak Prussian.

LINES TO AN OLD MAID.

Do you ever think, Miss Hannah,
With your grey cat by your side,
Of the sunny days of twenty,
When you might have been a bride?

Think you how you treated Walter,
Of the brave and noble heart—
Won him for your love of conquest,
Just to play the coquette's part?

And young Herman was rejected,
Only that he looked so green;
But a wiser, truer man than
He became, is seldom seen.

Harry was too poor to suit you;
Ned was cursed with sandy hair;
William's eyes were dark as midnight,
But his face was none too fair.

You with wealth and youth and beauty,
Reigning o'er all hearts as queen,
Might have wed with nature's noblest,
By a gentle, modest mien.

But your looks, so cold and haughty,
Made each lover take his hat;
Till at last they all have left you
With that everlasting cat!

S. P.

GEMS.

ENVY shoots at others and wounds only herself.

It costs more to borrow than it does to buy.

If you want to get a favour from a man, feed him. A man is like a horse—he can't be managed until he has a bit in his mouth.

A wise man is known by three things—by making his enemy his friend, the ignorant learned, and by reforming the evil disposition into goodness.

We are generally lively, ardent, curious to know the life of a neighbour; but slow, idle and blind to know, to correct and to condemn our own life.

A MAN should no more make his honesty a boast than a woman should her virtue. To speak too much of either renders them questionable.

HALF the secrets in the world are disclosed in order that those who possess them may let their friends know that they hold them.

NONE are more to be pitied than those who have the means of gratifying their desires before they have learned to govern them.

GREAT talent renders a man famous, great merit produces respect; but kind feeling alone insures affection.

To commiserate is sometimes more than to give; for money is external to a man's self, but he who bestows compassion communicates his own self.

By six qualities may a fool be known—anger without cause, speech without profit, change without motive, inquiry without an object, putting trust in a stranger, and wanting capacity to discriminate between a friend and a foe.

THE Custom House officials of New York are furnished with small phials, containing each an ounce of some grayish cholera mixture, with which they immediately dose each person, sick or well, who arrives in that port.

Be and continue poor, young man, while others around you grow rich by fraud and dishonesty; be without place or power, while others beg their way upward; bear the pain of disappointed hopes, while others gain the accomplishment of theirs by flattery;

forego the gracious pressure of the hand, for which others cringe and crawl. Wrap yourself in your own virtue, and seek a friend and your daily bread. If you have, in such a course, grown grey with unbleached honour, bless heaven and die.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RHUBARB WINE.—This is frequently made in Leicestershire, and is one of the best home-made wines, being what wine-merchants call "clean," that is, free from any coarse or objectionable flavour. It forms an excellent "foundation" wine, to which any desired flavour can be added.

FRECKLES.—Take powdered nitre (saltpetre), any small quantity, and apply it to the parts affected, by the finger moistened and dipped in the powder. This is the whole proceeding; when properly done, and judiciously repeated, it will remove all freckles from the face.

WASH FOR SHINGLE OR BOARD ROOFS.—To every six quarts of quick-lime add one quart of rock salt and one gallon of water. After this, boil and skim clean. To every five gallons of this add, by slow degrees, three-quarters of a pound of potash and four quarts of fine sand. Colouring matter may be added if desired. Apply with a paint or whitewash brush. This wash looks as well as paint, and is as durable as slate.

BUTTER.—This substance, which we regard as a delicacy, was used by the ancients as an ointment for the body. Plutarch relates that a Spartan lady once visited Borenia, the wife of Dojotarus, and that the former smelt so strongly of sweet ointment, and the latter of butter, that neither could endure the other. At the present day, in some of the countries of Southern Europe, butter is sold by the apothecaries as a medicine, the people using olive and other oils in its place.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A CALIFORNIAN paper mentions a drove of 200 turkeys being *en route* for San Francisco on foot. They had already got over 100 miles.

It is believed for the first time on record there was not during the month of June a single arrival of wheat from the United States, while of flour the receipts thence were only 1023 sacks.

AN Act has been printed to enable the Postmaster-General to sit in the House of Commons. If a member accepts the office a re-election is to take place, but he is eligible to be re-elected.

TWENTY-FIVE thousand invitations are to be sent to all nations for the opening of the Paris Exhibition, therefore the selectness is guaranteed by this act.

THE French Government has advertised for 1,000,000 kilogrammes of saltpetre, to be delivered before the 1st of December. This looks as if the Emperor had some afterthought in his cranium.

MRS. PHILLIPS has just died near Castlecomer, aged 100 years. Her husband was killed by the insurgents of '98, so that she had been a widow for the long period of sixty-eight years.

THE Tynwald Court is taking measures to prevent the destruction of sea-fowl on the Manx coast. Gulls are considered to be a guide for fishermen in prosecuting the herring fishery.

THE park railings are, we are happy to hear, to be placed a considerable distance back; we hope not in Park Lane alone, but all sides. The police are to have the charge of the park, and gas is to be introduced. Out of evil good has come.

IN the match Surrey v. England last week, Mr. Grace, who made 224 runs, is calculated to have travelled five miles between the wickets. Poor man! how many postmen, however old, travel ten miles, and with profit to the country and themselves, (16s. a week) in the same time!

A WONDERFUL cashmere shawl, now in Calcutta, will be among the sights of the Great Exhibition at Paris next year. It is worked in arabesques of unheard-of fineness on red ground, and was ten years in the workman's frame. It was originally ordered for the Queen of Oude, not long before the Sepoy revolt.

HERE is one of Zadkiel's predictions for August:—"This month is important for the Emperor of the French. The influences about the eighth day point to the suffering health of the Imperial Prince, and tell of great anxieties of his father, who will now undoubtedly suffer in connection with his son. He seems to have some quarrel on his hands now also, and if he employ his troops they snatch a victory." Not bad on the side of the stars this time.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A FOREIGNER.—You cannot take proceedings against the servant of a foreign ambassador without first obtaining the permission of the Foreign Office.

VIOLET, medium height, fair, brown hair, blue eyes; well educated, and thoroughly domesticated.

DAISY, sixteen, fair, dark hair and eyes, musical, and very domesticated.

AN ANXIOUS ONE.—Two shillings and sixpence per week.

NELLY, nineteen, dark, rather tall, gentle, and affectionate, very fond of music and poetry.

LEOLAH, eighteen, tall, and dark. The gentleman must be dark and good tempered.

ROBERT.—Alcohol or ether will dissolve camphor.

EDOUARD.—For weak eyes use the following lotion:—Sulphate of zinc, three grains; tincture of opium, ten drops; water, two ounces. Carefully apply three times a day.

ENGINEER.—The Victoria Tubular Bridge over the St. Lawrence is two miles in length, the width between the abutments being 6,000 feet.

ASPIRANT.—Post Office clerks are examined in handwriting and orthography, with arithmetic (including reduction, rule of three, and practice).

W. H. R., 5 ft. 6 in. in height, fair, blue eyes, good looking, and being desirous to establish himself as a chemist, requires a lady with a small income.

A. X. S., a mechanic, twenty-four, medium height, brown hair, appearance passable but not fine; wages 36s. per week, with a small sum in the savings bank.

F. M. W. B.—To "prevent glue fermenting after having been reduced to liquid," keep the water around the glue-kettle 200 degrees of heat. It will ferment at 213 degrees of heat.

BIBLICUS.—Messiah is a Hebrew word, signifying "The Anointed," and applied, as expressive of eminence, to our Saviour. It was the custom among the Jews to anoint all high personages, as kings, &c.

STUDENT.—Microscope comes from the Greek words *micro* (little) and *scope* (I see). The name of its inventor is lost in antiquity. Zachari Freinzen and his son, however, are said to have made microscopes before 1690.

LOTTIE, nineteen, would like to find a suitable partner. She is of middle height, dark eyes and hair, can play and sing, is thoroughly domesticated, and feels she could make a good husband very happy.

ELISE, eighteen, wishes to meet with a handsome and good gentleman for a correspondent; she cares not whether dark or fair. She is dark, of middle height, can play and sing, is well educated, and good looking.

MARIA.—To clean kid gloves: Place them on your hands and wash them (as if washing your hands in the ordinary way) in some spirits of turpentine. Then hang them in a warm place, or in a current of air.

ALFRED GERARDIN, eighteen, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, dark, brown hair and eyes, well educated. Respondent must be about seventeen; money no object, as he has a good business of his own.

AN OLD BOY.—Omnibuses were first used in Paris in 1825. They were introduced to London by Shillibee in 1829. The first, drawn by three horses abreast, ran from the Angel, Islington, to Paddington.

PERCY GREENVILLE, nineteen, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, good looking, of respectable family, in a situation of responsibility in an eminent firm. The lady must be about seventeen, amiable, ladylike, highly educated, tall, of graceful figure, and decidedly pretty.

ROBERT.—Without a doubt you have the best of the dispute. *Royals* means, not alone the crown, orb, sceptre, and jewels used at the coronation, but the prerogatives of the Sovereign—to wit, the power of life and death, that of peace and war, the coinage of money, &c.

WALTER would like a lady from sixteen to seventeen, good looking, dark hair, and good teeth, and about 5 ft. 4 in. in height. "Walter" is seventeen, with dark hair, blue eyes, good teeth, tolerably good looking, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, can play the piano, very fond of music, and holds a good situation.

ARABELLA.—The reason for the wedding-ring being placed on the fourth finger of the left hand has been variously explained. The old superstition was that a main artery ran from this finger to the heart. The probability, however, is that the fourth finger was chosen only from its being not only used less than either of the rest, but more capable of preserving a ring from injury. 2. The ring is no longer an essential part of the marriage ceremony—the "Act" of 1837 instituted marriage to be a civil contract; but although this Act rendered the use of the ring no longer absolutely necessary, it does not forbid it. The custom, however, has been too long hallowed by time to fall into disuse merely

through the silence of an Act of Parliament. "Arabella" is, therefore, right in insisting upon the ring, whether the ceremony be performed in church or before the registrar.

C. A.—If you parted legitimately with the pledge tickets, their present holder can, of course, retain them. If not, and you lost them or had them stolen from you, your course will be to apply to a magistrate, who will probably compel the present holder to prove how she became possessed of them.

MEMORY.—You are right. The 14th has proved anything but fortunate to rulers, for on the 14th died William III., Anne, George I., George II., George III., George IV., William IV., Washington, Lincoln, and others, and on a Saturday also.

A MUSICIAN.—Clarichord, or Clairchord, was an instrument in use in the days of Elizabeth. It was in the form of a spinnet with forty-nine or fifty stops and seventy strings. The chords were covered with cloth to render the sound sweeter and deaden it, so that it could not be heard at a distance. This instrument was, therefore, used by the nuns.

HEReward, twenty-four, middle height, not bad looking, well educated, and good tempered. Has 350l. per annum and good expectations. His partner must be well educated, accomplished, amiable, not over twenty-four, nor in height under 5 ft. 2 in. If possessed of beauty and some means, so much the better, but they are not indispensable.

E. S.—1. Apply either personally or by letter to the Right Hon. Spencer Horatio Walpole, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department. 2. Your handwriting is good; we do not, however, undertake to judge of people's character from their handwriting.

"LET US PREY!"
OR, THE FOX AND THE POULTRY.

A fox, while standing on a wall,
Espied some fowl one day;
When, wishing to devour them all,
He said, "Now let us prey."

No sooner was the wish expressed,
Than down he jumped straightway;
And biddes sorely were distressed,
While on them he did prey.

The feathers soon began to fly,
As he did biddes say;
And loud for help did biddes cry,
The more did Reynard prey.

How like the fox are many men—
We meet such every day;
They'll smile and fawn around you, when
On you they wish to prey.

With honeyed words they'll flatter you,
The finest things will say,
That they may better play the Jew,
And thus make you their prey.

They'll to your sympathies appeal,
Tell you for you they'll pray;
Then in your pockets they will feel,
And there begin to prey.

We trust 'twill not be always so,
But hope to see the day
When every heart with love shall glow,
And man for man shall prey.

That everywhere beneath the sun,
As we've been taught to pray,
God's will by all men shall be done,
In all they do or say.

R. T.

JULIA.—Rest contented with the hair nature has given you. You admit that you are a brunette—what colour, then, could be more suitable than the rich, dark brown hair of which you may well boast? The false hair—viz. that of a rosy tint, which you seem to desire, has fetched in Paris as much as 5s. the ounce.

WINTERF.—The anniversary of the inauguration of the American Constitution is the 4th of March, for from the 4th of March, 1789, dates not only the assembly of the first Congress, but the inauguration of the first President, Washington.

COCKNEY.—The Dukes of Bedford and Portland, the Marquess of Exeter, Salisbury, Northampton, Westminster, and Camden, and the Earls of Portland and Craven hold more landed and house property in London than any ninety commoners.

EDMUND.—The word assassin is derived from a Prince of the family of the Arsacids, commonly called assassins, who lived in a castle between Antioch and Damascus, who trained in blind obedience to his commands a number of young men, whom he employed in murdering the princes with whom he was at enmity. Surely "Edmund" if he has read Scott, must remember the "Old Man of the Mountain," who was the terror of the Crusaders.

CLARA ELLEN and FLORENCE ALICIA, two young ladies of very aristocratic bearing and of good families. "Clara Ellen," twenty, medium height, beautiful dark brown eyes and wavy hair, very lively, good tempered, and very good looking, and thoroughly domesticated. "Florence Alicia," nineteen, tall, ladylike, and exceedingly good looking, very sweet tempered and domesticated; she has pretty blue eyes and dark curly hair.

SIGNOR MAFFEO.—We cannot comply with this correspondent's request. It would be the height of empiricism, if not absurdity, for us to prescribe a cure for an ass. The signor, however, being a foreigner, may be aware that the great metropolis of England abounds with hospitals, whose physicians and surgeons are among the most eminent in the world, and, moreover, give their advice free.

GEORGINA, twenty, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair, light brown wavy hair, loving grey eyes, high forehead, and small mouth. She can make her own dresses, trim her bonnets, keep house, make a shirt, and cook a dinner. No gentleman who is at all proud of himself need respond, "for," says "Georgina," "I follow the occupation of a day governess, and am not ashamed to own it." (Why should she be so? It is a noble calling if nobly followed.) "I," adds the young lady, "have received a good education in all the usual branches except languages, and am fond of music and dancing. Respondent must be a member of the Church of England, very steady, and fond of home; looks are perfectly immaterial if the disposition be good. "Georgina" further asks us the signification of her own Christian name.

Has our fair correspondent, who, by the way, spells it "Georgina," in the course of her education, and her vocation as a governess, never heard of the Georgica of Virgil, a poetic essay on husbandry, in four books?

THOMAS.—You are correct. There was an ancient sect called Quintilians, from their prophesies, Quintilines. In this sect the women acted as priests and bishops, because they believed that Eve obtained extraordinary gifts from having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge.

L. W. Y. BEUCE.—1. There are several large manufacturers of the apparatus you mention in the King's Road, Chelsea, near Cromore; either would supply you with the information you require. It would be tedious for us to recommend any one in particular. 2. Consult the pages of "Bradshaw" or the "A. B. C." 3. Place the insects in a sealed tin box, which steep in hot water; this will kill the butterflies, yet preserve them for your collection. Such is one of the methods adopted by those given to such a cruel amusement.

D. T. B. Y.—How can we help a young man who has fallen deeply in love with a pretty countess, and yet is afraid to "propose" because he is "out of work"? The difficulty is obvious. No young man is justified in falling in love while he is out of work. Remember the maxim, that you must have a stable before you can keep a horse. Get work first, and then "propose." The fact of the fair one being your cousin shows—a cause or excuse from yourself not having intervened—be half the battle won.

SOCIETIES.—To your several queries we answer—1. Wholesale food, abstention from strong drinks, and exercise in the open air. 2. Your voice will improve by study and practice; join a choir. 3. There is no royal road to shorthand. It may be acquired in two or three years. Upon the other hand, some of our oldest reporters have never attained proficiency; all depends upon your industry and spirit. For a beginner Pitman's Phonography is perhaps the best. 4. Handwriting very good, but would be better if it did not occupy so much space.

RICHARDSON.—The origin of signboards is ascribed to the fact that, in former times, the houses of the nobility, both in town and country, when the family were absent, were used as hostleries for travellers. The family arms always hung in front of the house, and the most conspicuous object in those arms gave a name to the establishment amongst travellers, who, unacquainted with the system of heraldry, called a lion *gules* or *scarce* by the vernacular name of the Red or Blue Lion. It is notable that the greatest painters of the past have painted them, leading literary men have written about them, and the legislature has legislated for them. At one time every tradesman had his sign, and they answered the purpose of numbers to their houses.

A. B. C.—Your case, indeed, is a hard one, for if your wife desires not her own cure, we can give you little hope. If, however, by moral force and kindness you can persuade her to such a desire, the following prescription will do much to allay the craving for alcohol.—Sulphate of iron, five grains; magnesia, ten grains; peppermint water, eleven drachms; spirit of nutmeg, one drachm: to be taken twice a day. You had better, however, consult the surgeon of Westminster Hospital, who, we believe, has effected many cures, but, at all events, has written an admirable book, entitled "Chronic Intoxication." The Scotch, we may observe, are in the treatment of such cases far wiser than the English, having established in an island near Glasgow a sanatorium for the especial reception and cure of such cases.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

ALPHONSO is responded to by—"Lizzie" just eighteen, dark hair, small hands and feet, very good looking, loving, and amiable. An orphan, and will have 200l. a year on attaining twenty-one.

TOM R. and TOM M. by—"Eva" and "Alice." The former by "Eva," twenty, pretty, and affectionate. The latter by "Alice," twenty-one, tall, and graceful.

CHARLIE E. by—"M. H. L.," nineteen, medium height, dark brown eyes, curly hair, and merry disposition.

WALTER NEVILLE by—"Flora," twenty-two, very fair, dark eyes, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, a pretty figure, very domesticated, and fond of home.

ERNEST by—"Flora," who is already in love with his description of himself. She is seventeen, tall, fair, and good business.

W. A. by—"E. J. A." 5 ft. 2 in. in height, neither dark nor fair, a loving disposition, true heart, good temper, and very domesticated.

JESSIE by—"Dramaticus," 6 ft. in height, very dark, and able to place "Jessie" in a good position on the stage provided the lady has the necessary abilities. Would be glad to open a correspondence with "Jessie."

W. Y. by—"George F.," a stranger in Great Britain, but of English parentage, twenty-three, well connected, and with an income sufficient to keep a wife comfortably; and—"Law Clerk," nineteen, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, humorous disposition; at present in the employ of a solicitor.

FLORENCE by—"T. H.," nineteen, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, respectfully connected, and expects shortly to be in a good business.

LAURA and JEANNIE by—"Alfred Egerton," twenty-two, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, fair, and very good looking, and will be in possession of an annual income of about 100l. a year in about a month's time; "Laura," also by—"N. V. G.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, dark, not bad looking, has a good situation, a clerk in a large mercantile firm, and thinks he would make "Laura" a good husband, if she would not object to wait a short time, in order that they might become more fully acquainted with each other.

PART XL, FOR SEPTEMBER, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

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Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. VI. PRICE ONE PENNY.

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